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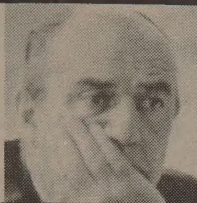
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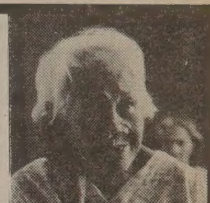
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Residential and day-care services

Society breaks new ground

A fundamental reorganisation of residential and day care services will establish The Spastics Society as a leader in the field.

749 residents living in 29 units will be affected.

New policy objectives were approved by the Executive Council at the end of November. They are based on the philosophy of the Registered Homes Act 1984 and *Home Life: a code of practice for residential care*: residents should have the right to self-determination, individuality and living conditions which correspond to private homes.

"Failure to live in integrated settings is never the result of the disabled person's disabilities," John Belcher, Social Services Director, told the Executive Council. "It is invariably the result of the service organisation's



Michael Eppstein does the washing up in his own specially adapted flat. He lives in the Milton Keynes Community Care Scheme which is run by The Spastics Society.

inability to provide appropriate and sufficient local support."

So his 5-year plan, estimated to cost around £15 million, will make residential services available in many types of accommodation - "core" centres which will also act as regional assessment centres, housing owned or leased by the Society, and accommodation which is owned or leased by cp people, either individually or in groups.

While some residents may prefer to remain in a residential unit, others will get the opportunity to move into more inte-

grated accommodation. An individual programme plan is to be introduced for each resident.

The style of care will also change. Care will be geared to individual needs. The "carer" will give way to the "enabler", and the "provider" of services will become the "co-ordinator".

The first phase of the plan starts this month. At five representative units - Broadstones Hostel, Chester Hostel, Kyre Park Centre, Norwich Hostel and Thorngrove Centre - project steering groups are being set up. The requirements of residents will be analysed and then translated into training programmes for residents and staff.

"These units were selected first, partly because work has already begun among residents and staff and partly because some units come under local authorities which have said they will be active in applying the Code," said John Belcher.

He admitted that many units do not meet the Code's requirements - for example, half of them have more than 2 people to a bedroom.

"We've allowed ourselves to fall behind in this area," he said. "That is why I am very excited that the new policy has been accepted. It will bring disabled people into the community, into family-style housing in ordinary streets. And it will place the Society in the forefront of residential provision."

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It's International Youth Year!

1985 has been designated International Youth Year by the United Nations to highlight the needs and aspirations of young people aged 15 to 25. Participation, development and peace are the 3 themes, and they are equally relevant to disabled as well as able-bodied people. The Spastics Society and the IYY Committee for England share the same patron, His Grace the Duke of Westminster.



So what is the Society planning for IYY? Here is a list to whet your appetite. We will let you know when other dates are fixed.

★ "Writing for Theatre" workshop (Fitzroy Square, London, 11-13 January). A weekend course for 20 young people run by David Sulkin of the Young People's Theatre Scheme at the Royal Court Theatre. They will work together and develop their creative skills guided by professional writers, Caryl Churchill and Hanif Kureishi, and the young disabled writer, Tony Newton.

★ DISPART (Disabled Participation), a group of voluntary organisations who will be sharing information and supporting each other's activities, is launched 29 January. Joint ventures will include "Coming In, a 14-day video experience" (Thomas Delarue School, Tonbridge, 10-24 August) organised by The Spastics Society and PHAB. It will offer 16 disabled people experience in all aspects of video making and culminate in shooting and editing sequences which could be the basis of a PHAB video to encourage leaders of able-bodied youth clubs to integrate young people with disabilities.

DISPART will also be helping to produce *Applying to Higher Education*, a new booklet from the National Bureau for Handicapped Students.

★ "An invitation to sound, vision and action" (Beaumont College, Lancashire, 20-26 April). Creative workshops for up to 50 students from the Society, local schools and colleges and from abroad will explore the themes of IYY using drama, dance, music, lighting, photography, creative writing, ceramics and video. At an Open Day at the end of the week there will be an opportunity to share experiences before an invited audience, including the Duke of Westminster.

★ Regional conferences at which disabled and able-bodied young people will be able to share experiences and plan future campaigns, eg South-East Region employment conference (Kent, September) and North-West Region peace conference.

★ Regional sports and leisure events, eg North-West Region "Have-a-go" sports day for disabled and able-bodied young people (March) with many indoor sports, and coaching; South-East Region sports and leisure weekend (Thomas Delarue School, Tonbridge, June).

★ Youth exchanges. Milan: 8 disabled people will exchange with 8 from the Italian Spastics Society in Milan (February) to compare the uses of computers. Morocco: 10 disabled people and 10 helpers, including 2 leaders, will visit Marrakesh and the Atlas Mountains (12 days, November) to study the effect of the desert and mountain terrain on the cultural development of Morocco.

★ Regional youth exchanges, eg South-East Region is arranging an exchange of 10-20 people with the Singapore spastics organisation (September or October).

★ "People need People", a one-day conference sponsored by *Disability Now* for disabled and able-bodied people. Workshops will explore personal relationships in different environments and with specific disabilities, and relationships between disabled and able-bodied people.

★ Operation Raleigh - the Society's Churchtown Farm is the assessment centre in 1985 for disabled people wishing to join the expedition.

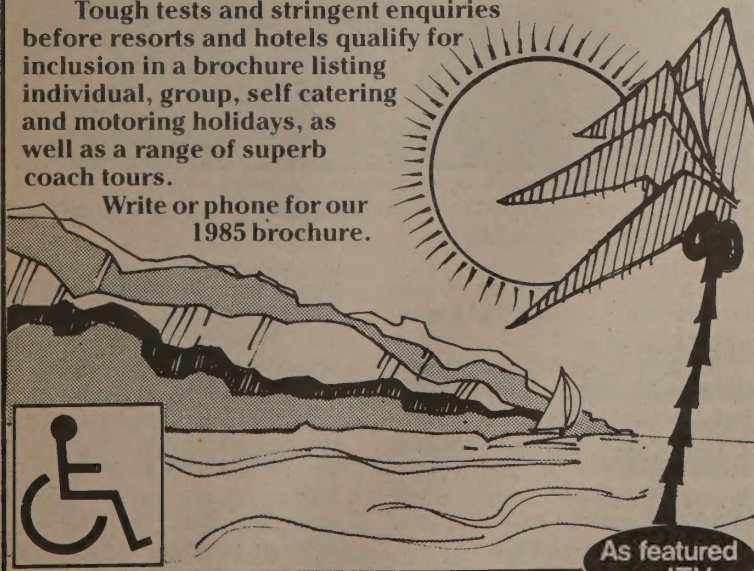
For further information on any of these events, contact the Information Officer, tel 01-636 5020, extension 240.

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THE DIRECTOR

It's evolution I believe in

John Cox talks to Mary Wilkinson about his first 365 days

MW: When we talked before, you said it would take a year to learn about the Society.

JC: A year is a very short time to understand an organisation as complex as ours. What I found was a remarkable Society with a spectrum of work from pre-conception to death. I also found groups of marvellous people – the volunteers – each with different aspirations, different ways of working and different constitutions. I still haven't learned enough about them.

The strength of the Society is the volunteers, and what worries us all is that we really haven't had enough injection of new blood into these groups. We have not produced an incentive for younger parents to join us.

MW: How can we do this?

JC: It's not answering your question, but in any family it's the parents who change in order to communicate with their children. So I think our approach to younger people has to be carefully studied. We've got to go into technical colleges, schools and universities. Young people are aware of what is going on; they're more committed; and somehow we've got to harness this caring for the Society.

Also, a huge section of the population has not wanted to be involved or swallowed up by "The Spastics Society" because they have not wanted their children to be called "spastics". We have to persuade them that no one in the Society wants to swallow them up but we do want to know what services they would like from us.

One thing I notice is that handicap is becoming "non-denominational." I welcome this spread. Not that the Society has to do with all kinds of handicap; it doesn't. But I hope the rigid demarcation lines can be eroded.

MW: Did you find a lack of communication within the Society?

JW: Yes. In my experience, the strength of an organisation is the strength of its communication, which must go down in order to come up. I don't feel that we have closed that loop. That is why we directors are doing more travelling and visiting in order to share thoughts, and listen. It's vital. I was glad the Executive Council allowed me to discuss the 1985/6 objectives at the AGM before they had been approved and that those objectives may be sent out to groups.

MW: Has communication improved?

JC: I hope staff communication and staff attitudes have improved. On a personal level, I appreciate the way volunteers are prepared to have a dialogue with me. We haven't overcome the problem by a long way but we have made a start.

MW: Would you call this a soul-searching year?

JC: Yes. If you've grown as fast as we've grown, you've got to pause to look ahead and see where you are going.

The 1984 Registered Homes Act and the Code of Good Practice have meant an enormous change in our residential policy.



John Cox talks with Hugh Thomas during a lull at the AGM.

The flavour of the year, if you like, has been towards bringing handicapped people into the community. There are both advantages and dangers here. The handicapped person should be seen as a person who happens to be handicapped and that's all the more reason why he or she should be in the community. But having said that, you have to be very careful how you wear a person away from the comfort and routine of an institution, for there will be more loneliness, more fending for oneself, more need for initiative. You don't stuff a chocolate into someone's mouth who has never eaten chocolate before.

Also, we've got to educate and inform the community much more so that they will understand that the person next door is a person. This is why the advertising campaign and *Disability Now* are terribly important.

MW: Last year a working party of the Executive Council started considering the Society's constitution. What recommendations do you hope will emerge?

JC: I hope that they will look at that constitution which is now 33 years old, to see if it sufficeth today in view of the enormous changes we've got to make.

MW: What do you think about the role of disabled people in the Society?

JC: I'm unhappy about two aspects. First, about what used to be called the Consumer Group, now the Alpha Advisory Committee. I would like to see the Executive Council ratify a new constitution for it, so that it is a proper advisory committee with teeth – a budget and perhaps a temporary staff member – and has members elected from the regions.

committees will elect a proportion of disabled people and that those with disabilities will be represented in local groups too.

I am also unhappy about the low number of disabled people who are employed in the Society. If they see that we have an employment policy – and it's only in its infancy yet – that will, I hope, encourage them to reply to advertisements.

MW: You seem to have shaken up the Society.

JC: No. That sounds like a revolution, which I'm never in favour of. It's evolution I believe in – looking and listening and learning and then analysing how effective we've been and whether there are other ways of doing it. It's not till we know what we are doing that we can go forward.

If there has been any achievement in the last year it has been towards securing a firmer base.

MW: Do you regret any decision?

JC: I'm certain there have been wrong decisions every day! But I haven't been able to make any decisions other than management ones because I don't decide for the Society. The Executive Council does that.

MW: Has your view of your role changed?

JC: Last year I said to you that the Executive Council produces the policy and I implement it. I would change that now. Apart from being accountable for day to day business, I'm also accountable for looking at tomorrow – not just posing the problems but working out possible solutions and the consequences. The Council has the expertise in cp to make decisions but not the time to work out solutions. I spent a lot of time last year looking at tomorrow – and tomorrow can be 5 years or 10.

MW: A year ago, Tim Yeo saw one of his achievements as having brought the Society into a position of leadership in the disability community. Do you think we have retained that position?

JC: The short answer is yes, I have no doubt. Within central government we are counted as a force. Within the voluntary sector we are very respected. And if you are talking in terms of money-making we are way ahead of most of the field.

But I don't think this is the right way to judge us. The only time we can sleep easy in our beds is when we have served sufficiently to meet the needs of those with cp – and we haven't.

We don't know how many there are or their requirements; we haven't got enough money and we haven't got enough services. We've gone some way towards it, but we still have a long way to go. And that's a much more realistic yardstick.

MW: This year the Society has been looking at itself and its public image. How would you like the Society to be perceived?

JC: I'm much less worried about how the public sees The Spastics Society than I am about how Mr Public reacts to a person with a handicap. I can't stress enough just how great a task I think we have: to promote understanding through education in order to produce acceptance.

MW: It's been a hardworking year, hasn't it?

JC: Since 3 January I've travelled 22,000 miles in my car, taken about 30 train journeys and 4 air trips – and talked an awful lot! 60-70 per cent of my time is spent on communication.

The hours are no longer than in the navy. All round me people are working long hours. I admire our staff enormously. There is no question of value for money; they give and give. I'm proud to belong to such an organisation.

Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

After 16 – the great void

As parents of Rutland House School, we wish to express our concern about the Society's policy towards severely-handicapped children. Our impression is that the Society is less interested in them, perhaps because there is more advantage to be gained in areas where there is likely to be a higher "success rate".

There seems to be a great void, for example, in the Society's educational facilities for those over the age of 16 and nowhere for them to continue the excellent educational training started at Rutland House School. Unless something is provided, the children will be left in a vacuum and the chances are that they will regress and suffer hardship.

In the long term, we would like to see an educational system for severely handicapped children that divided into under-5s, 5-11 and 11-19.

We are also concerned about what appears to be a constant battle between local authorities and the Society. We feel that both should work more closely together since each has much to offer the other in the way of information, expertise, equipment and facilities.

Although we realise that this is outside the province of the Society, we would ultimately like to see responsibility for handicap-

ped people over 19 transferred from social services to the education authorities. Able-bodied children often continue their education into their mid-20s, yet this seems to be denied to handicapped people whose needs would seem to be greater.

Nearer home, we would like the Society to reconsider its policy towards assessment. We think the present system is inadequate. Fitzroy Square in London is not the best place to carry out an assessment because the child is outside his normal environment. We do not think the assessment can be carried out properly in one day and we feel that the criteria is based on mental awareness not physical handicap.

Lastly, since there must be many "hidden" children who do not have the opportunity for remedial education, we think the Society should endeavour to provide more schools for severely handicapped children like Rutland House School where the family atmosphere and environment are as important as the educational facilities.

Michael Barrass
representing parents of Rutland House School.

Freddie Green, the Society's new Director of Education, will be talking to me about his policies and objectives in the February issue. He will also answer the points raised in this letter – Editor.

Mrs Indira Gandhi



At Fitzroy Square in 1982, Mrs Indira Gandhi and Mrs Joyce Smith talk to student Malini Chib Alur, daughter of the then chairman of The Spastics Society of India.

The tragic death of Mrs Indira Gandhi last October was a great sadness to us all.

In spite of her heavy responsibilities, she always found time to help handicapped people. Perhaps part of this concern arose from the fact that one of her relatives has a cerebral palsied son, and she knew many of the problems first hand.

Mrs Gandhi was a good friend of The Spastics Society of India and its affiliated groups.

In 1981, when the Society and the Action India Group were organising conferences in 5 major cities, she gave a private audience to a dozen delegates and listened to our case for government help for India's vast population of handicapped people. Her help came almost im-

mediately, including generous tax concessions on donations to The Spastics Society of India, which paved the way for its new and expanding services.

In 1982 she visited The Spastics Society's Fitzroy Square Centre to see the assessment and advisory work we do with children and their families and to view an exhibition of the work of The Spastics Society of India.

Over the years, Mrs Gandhi's support for the rights of handicapped people has been invaluable – one word from her had officials moving rapidly in all the right directions!

The loss of a world leader with such deep commitment to the handicapped is irreparable, but Mrs Gandhi's spirit will live on.

Joyce Smith

WATCH IT!

The girl sent to Frederick Theak and Co for a clerical job involving a lot of photocopying and paperfolding didn't exactly inspire confidence. She had spasticism and severely limited use of one arm because of partial paralysis.

Mens Wear, October - Alan Durant

It is not our policy to correspond directly with residents in Part 3 accommodation.

Social services department in England - Louise Silburn

Annie is stuck in a 'state garbage bin', where the staff see her as little more than a vegetable to be fed and clothed. Smitten with the drooling exterior of a cerebral palsy sufferer, she is in fact highly intelligent...

Review of Annie's Coming Out in Time Out, November - Alan Durant

Keith Johnson, Joanne Ashton and Dave Prior are three young Mancunians they come from Manchester. And they'd 'escaped' from Strangeways Jail in Manchester to raise money for spastic victims.

Report in the Dublin Evening Press, 20 October - Louise Silburn

Please send your contributions (not forgetting the source and your name) to Watch it! Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Eileen Fry gives The Spastics Society's view of the MSC's new employment code

A Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Disabled People* was launched by the Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, last November. This Code, which has taken several years to prepare, is a major document giving detailed guidance on employing disabled people in open employment. Many groups, including The Spastics Society, were involved in drafting it.

The Code covers a wide range of issues. Part I, "Deciding on a Policy", is designed for directors and senior managers responsible for policy decisions and is relatively brief. It suggests policy objectives and structures through which they might be achieved and points to legislative obligations.

Part II, "Putting Policy into Practice", gives detailed advice to personnel and other managers involved in day to day recruitment and employment matters.

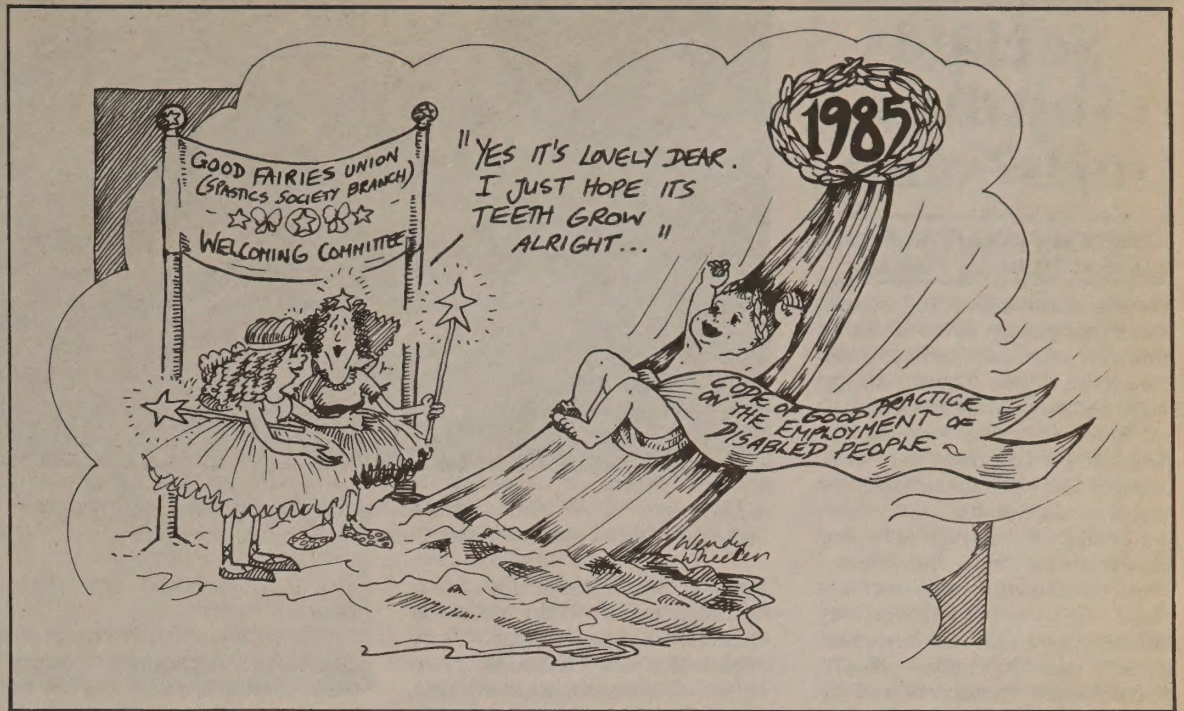
The legal requirements are set out. These are The Disabled Persons (Employment) Acts 1944 and 1958, which set up the Quota Scheme, and The Companies (Directors' Report) (Employment of Disabled Persons) Regulations 1980, which lay down certain requirements concerning publication of a policy statement on employment of disabled people.

There is a discussion of the variable nature of disability and employment handicap and the implications for employers.

Some of the worries employers may have about employing disabled people are looked at. Anxieties about health and safety, sickness absence, eligibility for pension schemes, al-

*The Code is available, free, from Room W1030, Manpower Services Commission, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ.

It looks good - but will it work?



terations to premises and equipment, communications with staff and management, manual dexterity and physical effort are all examined critically.

Good practices in recruitment and selection are outlined. This discussion covers job descriptions and job requirements, attracting suitable disabled applicants, asking questions about disability, interviews, health screening, the Job Introduction Scheme and the Pathway Employment Service.

The Code suggests, for instance, that suitable disabled applicants can be attracted by notifying vacancies to the Disablement Resettlement Officer at the Job Centre, the Specialist Careers Officer at the Careers Office, special schools and local disabled people's organisations. Advice is given about policies

towards disabled people at work including induction, integration, training and promotion.

The options to consider for employees who become disabled are discussed. Among these are continuing in the same job, switching to an alternative job and part-time work.

A section looks at the role of employees and their representatives, emphasising the need for their involvement.

Suggestions are made about the co-ordination of policy under a single executive and about drawing up a policy and a policy statement towards employing disabled people.

Finally, there is a section drawing together details of the help available.

The Society's policy and response to the Code has been compiled as a result of discussions between the directors, Social Services Division personnel and the Lobbying Department.

The Society welcomes the introduction of the Code. We consider that it is a very valuable document.

The Society will be considering its own employment policy and ways in which we might be able to promote employment of disabled people more generally, in the light of the Code. We

would strongly recommend to all employers that they follow its advice.

The last section, giving details of the help available, may prove to be particularly useful. There are however, some points which might perhaps be developed further. In particular, the crucial questions of assessing the abilities of disabled people and of re-assessing jobs in terms of the requirements which are actually needed could maybe be explored in greater depth.

The Society is also concerned about the purely voluntary status of the Code. We would urge MSC to monitor the effects of the Code very closely. Pending the outcome of this monitoring, we regard a voluntary approach as a necessary complement but not an alternative to statutory measures.

The Society does not, therefore, regard the introduction of the Code as a substitute for stricter enforcement of the Quota Scheme. Ideally we would like to see the Code backed by anti-discrimination legislation, and so given the quasi-legal status of the race and sex Codes.

Dr Eileen Fry is The Spastics Society's employment research officer.

MONTH IN PARLIAMENT



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Rate Support Grant ignores inflation

Patrick Jenkin, MP, the Environment Secretary, announced on 11 December that the rate support grant for 1985-6 will be £11.7 billion, or about the same as for 1984-5. This means there is no additional allowance for inflation.

(The rate support grant is the amount of money which the Government gives local councils to support their expenditure in a year.)

Many local authorities will be faced with a reduction in spending power and will have to consider ways of making up their shortfall. The alternatives open to them are cutting the budget to compensate for the grant, raising the rates, raising or introducing charges for services provided, drawing from the authority's reserves - or all of these.

1985 will be a year of difficult decisions for many local authorities.

Board and lodging

In 1983, Supplementary Benefits expenditure on board and lodging jumped from £205 million to £380 million. This was why the government was proposing changes in the payments, Norman Fowler, Social Services Secretary, told the Commons on 29 November. The changes were announced simultaneously in the Lords.

Mr Fowler was concerned on two counts. First, the number of people under 25 receiving board and lodging payments had risen by 60 per cent in 1983. Second, the present system of paying residential homes and nursing homes under the Supplementary Benefit scheme does not discriminate adequately between homes for different types of resi-

dent or patient. He could not see why the charges should vary from £51 to £215 a week in different parts of the country.

He proposed new national pay limits in the residential care and nursing sectors designed to reflect the varying cost of providing different types of care.

There was no question of elderly and disabled people being moved out of their existing accommodation, he said. Their position will be protected. He assured the House that the Government is committed to meeting the needs of elderly and disabled people while ensuring that the Supplementary Benefit scheme is not abused.

He also proposed that Attendance Allowance should be taken into account in assessing claims

Continued on page 4

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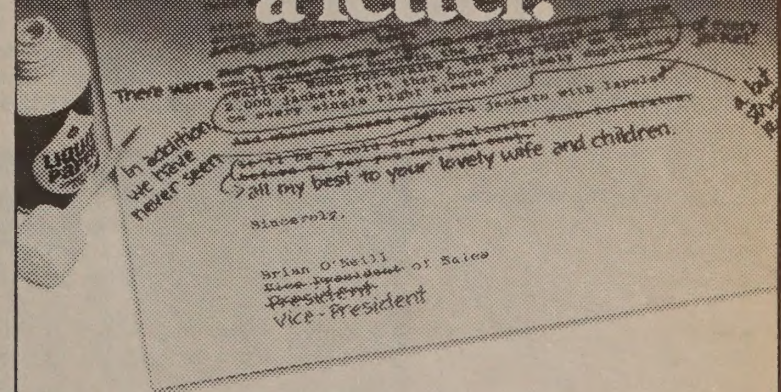


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CASTLE PRIORY

Socked by the microchip

Wendy Chandler reports on a multi-disciplinary course

The age of the microchip is here, and "Technology with disabled children and adolescents", the course at Castle Priory College from 4-9 November, socked it to us! In an intensive week of lectures and workshops we were bombarded with information to absorb and evaluate.

Certainly the course achieved its aim to be multi-disciplinary. From Great Britain and overseas came speech therapists, teachers, assistant teacher, community development officers, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, house parents, physicists, parents, activities librarians, electronic engineers and computer programmers.

Because several workshop leaders and lecturers fell ill or forgot to attend, there were some disappointing gaps in important areas, such as switches, and how to assemble BBC microcomputers (of particular interest to schools and OT departments who have had them provided, or part funded, by government departments). Fortunately the time left was well filled by people on the course who "volunteered" to assist in workshops and speak about how they use technology for children with special needs.

Exhibitions on two evenings, by representatives of high and low technology equipment companies, were valuable because they gave us an opportunity to investigate new and more well-known equipment which is commercially available.

Many people also found the



Michele Minns, a disabled Open University student, tries out a Microwriter with voice synthesiser, watched by Roger Jefcoate, organiser of the Castle Priory Course.

visit to the Centre for Communication in Education at Ormerod School, Oxford, very useful. We saw electronic portable communication aids, switches for computers and software.

Plenty of time was given for computer workshops but, unfortunately, these were too unstructured to cater for the wide variety of expertise and interests among people on the course.

In my opinion, the course was too focused on the use of micros in schools—a reflection, presumably, of current community resources for the disabled.

A refreshing contrast was offered by a group from Seven Springs Cheshire Home in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, who spoke about how micros could improve the quality of life for disabled adults in the areas of leisure, communication and personal and social independence.

Judy Murray, Head Occupational Therapist of the Bobath Centre, presented an excellent lecture on the basic visual, cognitive and hand function skills a child has to acquire before he can use a simple switch for a computer or portable electronic aid—something I am sure

a lot of people had not even been aware of before.

The opportunities to meet and talk with other people "off duty" were almost as valuable as the lectures and workshops themselves; everybody had something to offer and something to learn.

As our backgrounds, and hence what we hoped to gain, varied so much, it was difficult for the course to cater for everyone all the time. But most people seemed to find most of the topics interesting and to gain something from a more global approach.

The summing up session at the end revealed that everyone felt the course had been very worthwhile, though each discipline would have liked more focus on their particular area of interest.

For me, the course was a very time-effective way of making professional contacts and learning about resources and information concerned with technology and the disabled. But I doubt if I would want to attend it every year.

Wendy Chandler is an occupational therapist at The Spastics Society.

REPORTS

OU Conference

What can I.T. do?

On 30 November the Open University, financed by British Telecom, hosted a one-day conference on Information Technology (I.T.) and the Disabled Student in Higher Education. This was attended by some 200 delegates representing mainly universities, polytechnics and colleges of further education.

The objective of the conference was to highlight the problems facing disabled students in this sector of education and to bring to the attention of educationalists the role which I.T. can play in alleviating them.

Richard Stowell, Director of the National Bureau of Handicapped Students, suggested that there is a change of emphasis going on in the education of handicapped students—a move away from a medical approach towards focusing on specific educational needs. Once these are established, curricula and courses can be developed.

He wondered, however, where further education courses fitted into the total framework of special education provision, and what the future was for handicapped students after further education. While there is an increasing number of disabled students at all levels of mainstream education, there should be more provision for severely disabled students.

Derek Child, Advisor on the Education of Disabled Students

Month in Parliament

Continued from page 3
for Supplementary Benefits from people in private and voluntary residential care and nursing homes.

In the Lords, Lord Kilmarnock (SDP) asked for clarification of this point. Did the statement mean that Attendance Allowance would be withdrawn? (At present, Attendance Allowance is disregarded when calculating the benefit entitlements of people in private and voluntary homes and they normally have the full cost of their care met by Supplementary Benefit.)

Lord Glenarthur replied that there was a discrepancy between the situation of people in private and voluntary residential

at the Open University, and himself blind, questioned whether special courses should be laid on for handicapped students. He felt that academic standards should not be lowered for them and stressed the need for excellent counselling to ensure that they did not attempt courses for which they were unsuited.

Delegates were warned that, with no clear policy statement from central government, there are wide geographic variations in the provision of support for disabled students. Furthermore, while other EEC countries provide continuity of support, in the UK there is no central or government agency responsible for providing aid to a handicapped student during his time in higher education or on YTS schemes. (The privately funded COMET scheme, which attempts to bridge this gap, is 10 times over-subscribed.)

Professor David Hawkrige, of the Institute of Educational Technology, stressed the value of I.T. in transforming information delivered in one modality into a form suited to another. Assessment counselling and training in the use of I.T. aids is needed, not only for students, he said, but also for teachers and lecturers.

The afternoon sessions provided examples of how I.T. is helping further education students with specific handicaps.

This was a useful conference. For the first time it brought together teachers with a special responsibility for disabled students and showed them what could be done.

Dr Janet Larcher
Computer Coordinator

care and in local authority care which had attracted criticism from various people, including appointees responsible for handling claimants' money and proprietors of homes. Therefore, the government was proposing to take Attendance Allowance into account when assessing the ability of claimants in residential care and nursing homes to meet their fees.

Those who have been drawing Attendance Allowance to help meet particularly high charges would receive generous transitional protection from the Government, he added.

The Social Security Advisory Committee will report on the proposals this month.

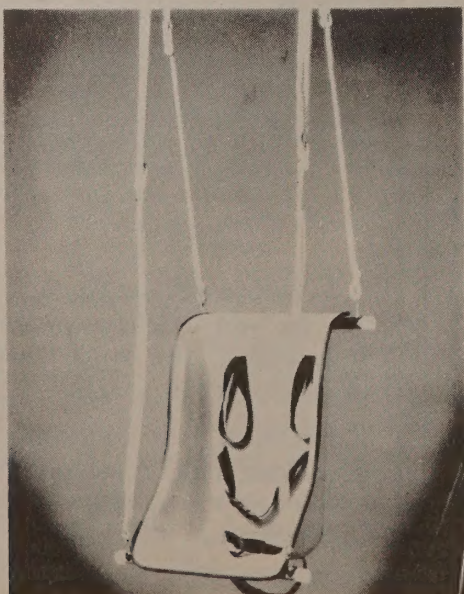
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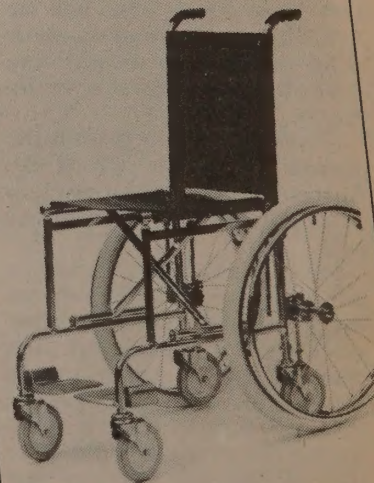
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NEWTON

SERVICES TO DISABLED PEOPLE FROM THE SPASTICS SOCIETY



"I don't know how to put this, but is it true you run a brothel for disabled people?"

Misconceptions like this persist – even among senior nursing staff – if you run an organisation called Sexual and Personal Relationships of the Disabled.

The acronym doesn't help either. Actually it should be SPROD, but by the time it was decided to incorporate "personal relationships" into the original Sexual Problems of the Disabled, SPOD had become too well known to be dropped.

In fact SPOD is a registered charity devoted to helping and counselling disabled people and to educating and training the professionals who care for them. It produces leaflets and booklets, organises study days, undertakes lecturing, offers help over the telephone and runs a counselling referral service.

It began 12 years ago as a voluntary committee under the aegis of the National Fund for Crippling Diseases, an attempt to counter established attitudes towards sexuality and disability.

"Society, by and large, just cannot cope with the idea of the disabled having the same emotional needs and desires as the rest of the population," wrote marriage counsellor and broadcaster, Dr Wendy Greengross, in *Entitled to Love* (1976). And by society she did not mean just the ordinary able-bodied person. The attitude was widespread among parents and professionals too.

A research project undertaken in 1976 found that of 252 disabled people living in Coventry, over 90 per cent said they had had sexual problems. Although a few needed counselling, most just wanted information and reassurance that it was alright to use sexual aids.

Having established the need, SPOD organised its first international conference in 1978 which brought together disabled people and professionals as equals. The following year it became an independent charity.

Since then, on a shoe-string budget and with a staff of only three, SPOD has tried to change professional and public opinion and to help people with both congenital and acquired disabilities.

It has been hampered by the difficulties of establishing itself as a limited company and by frequent changes of address. In July 1983, courtesy of the GLC, it finally settled in a rather decrepit 4-storey house in the Camden Road, London. But at least there is a lower ground-floor which is accessible to most wheelchairs, and last year SPOD was able to run its first study days for disabled people.

New chairman

Last month brought another change. Wendy Greengross, SPOD's first chairman, stepped down, and Margaret Morgan, the vice-chairman, took over. Before her retirement, Margaret Morgan was controller of The Spastics Society's Social Services Division.

To many people Wendy Greengross had vision, the best sort of vision for someone in a voluntary organisation: that through education and training SPOD could change attitudes to the point where existing services would cater for the sexual needs of disabled people and SPOD would be out of a job. That has not happened yet, but both Wendy Greengross and Margaret Morgan believe that much has been achieved in 12 years.

However, Morgan Williams, general secretary of SPOD, takes



One of the murals in SPOD's lower ground floor.

Initiator or reactor?

Mary Wilkinson finds SPOD in a dilemma

a more pessimistic view.

"*Entitled to Love* could have been written last month," he said. "It is still *the* text book and, sadly, things haven't changed that much."

Faced with continuing ignorance and prejudice – few doctors, for example, learn about human sexuality let alone sexuality and disability – it is understandable that Morgan Williams and the SPOD council should have opted for a middle-of-the-road, respectable image.

"We have thought and discussed a lot about whether we should be more of a ginger group, and we've decided that perhaps we shouldn't," he said. We felt it was better to err on the side of respectability rather than sensationalism for the protection of our other clients."

Criticism

This decision has laid SPOD open to criticism for not taking a stronger line on behalf of disabled people in recent events, for example, when a disabled ex-soldier wanted to marry in the Catholic Church and was initially refused.

On the other hand, SPOD felt vindicated about the position it took on *The Skin Horse*, the TV film about sexuality and disability.

"While I thought it was a good film, I felt it did our clients a great disservice," said Morgan Williams. "In fact I went on a 'right of reply' programme a week later and said so. Although a film on sexuality and disability as a consciousness-raiser had been badly needed, all that film did was to reinforce disabled people as freaks. Most of our clients aren't visibly disabled but feel disabled because they have a stoma or a mastectomy or whatever. I got a lot of letters and phone calls from people saying 'Well done, thank you for speaking for us.'"

Nevertheless, to take such a cautious view of publicity may not be in the long-term interests of SPOD. Why do voluntary organisations strive for a higher public profile if not to raise public consciousness about their cause and thereby increase their income?

Certainly SPOD needs money. Apart from having its rent subsidised by the GLC (and what will happen if the GLC is abolished?), it has to meet all running costs.

It operates on an annual DHSS grant of £32,000 which is fixed for the next 3 years. It makes less than £1000 a year from 118 individual members (£5 each) and 20 corporate members (£20 each). The rest of its income, £12-14,000, comes mainly from lecture fees, course fees, and the sale of information material.

Attempts at fundraising have not been successful. A recent trawl through 50 charitable trusts has produced only one or two nibbles.

"I think the way a lot of trusts are set up and the kind of people on their boards means that they tend to shy away when they hear our name," said Wendy Greengross.

The whole problem smacks of chicken and egg. Without a higher profile it is difficult to raise consciousness (or influence attitudes) enough to attract big money, but how can you create a higher profile if you have a sensitive client group and successful publicity would create a demand that could not be met?

Huge demand

"If we do get mentioned on a problem page we get a sackful of mail – and there are only 3 of us, each with at least 2 roles," said Morgan Williams.

The number of disabled people needing help and support is likely to rise as more of them are cared for in the community. Furthermore, they are not all heterosexual, as SPOD has now been brought to realise. (The next advisory leaflet will be on disability and homosexuality.)

Up till now, SPOD has tended to emphasise professional training and education. Some members of its Council would like a shift towards the needs of disabled people and to see more disabled people working with SPOD. (Currently there are 5 on a Council of 16.)

Two study days organised for disabled people last year were very poorly attended. Yet Dr Mary Davies, SPOD's hard-pressed education and training officer, is convinced of their value. "Lots of people who phone in want information and want to talk about their particular difficulty away from their establishment or family," she said.

One of the study days for 1985, on the problems of women in residential care, will

Professionals yes, disabled people no

How does SPOD translate purpose into action? To find out, I applied for two study days.

First, I attended "A Multidisciplinary Course on the Sexual Side of Physical Disability". The participants were 12 professionals (OTs, nurses etc), 11 of them able-bodied.

General secretary, Morgan Williams, began by outlining SPOD's history and objectives.

Dr Mary Davies, education and training officer, described some difficulties and problems experienced by people seeking SPOD's help, and cited specific difficulties associated with certain disabilities.

Then, led by Tony Latham, marriage guidance counsellor and sex therapist, small groups were asked to answer questions designed to help them understand their own attitudes to sexuality. This was difficult. Instant analysis always is. The intricate questions demanded far more thought and consideration than could be encompassed in the brief time allocated.

After lunch, we were shown some sex aids and were given examples of solutions to some problems experienced by SPOD's clients. Specific cases and solutions were explained.

The final session was an open discussion. Topics included frustration, isolation and the use of



temporary, surrogate partners.

Everyone found the day constructive and agreed that sexuality should be more important for the caring professions.

The second day course was called "Sexuality and Disability – A Course for Disabled People". This was cancelled because the other two participants who had applied did not arrive.

Given that a survey of disabled people in 1976 found that 92 per cent of disabled people had problems (past or present), and that all 12 professionals on the other course attended because experience had shown that disabled people need help, the lack of disabled applicants is surprising. Once before, SPOD ran a disabled people's course with a low turn-out. Why so few?

Possibly pride prohibits outside help, or there is intimidation, either institutional or parental. Perhaps there is naivety or martyr-like resignation. Whatever the answer, disabled people should not be insular and self-denying. SPOD exists to help people with disabilities, yet it is not being fully utilised.

Chris Davies

be run by Rosemary Dawson-Shepherd, a disabled member of the Council, and a counsellor.

There are many ways in which SPOD can develop. Mary Davies would like to see more contact with special schools. She is also concerned that, under the 1981 Education Act, more disabled teenagers will be moving into mainstream education and will need extra sexual education which takes account of their disability. A new booklet, *Sexual Education for Young People with Physical Disability* will be published this month.

Margaret Morgan supports the development of local groups (there are already 5). "I think the only way forward is decentralisation," she said. "But it does have to be dealt with carefully."

More staff are needed. A re-

search project last autumn into counselling needs suggests that many people just want skilled help on the phone and follow-up literature.

Margaret Morgan would like to see a more realistic counselling service provided for people with severe communication problems and more help for people with mental handicap.

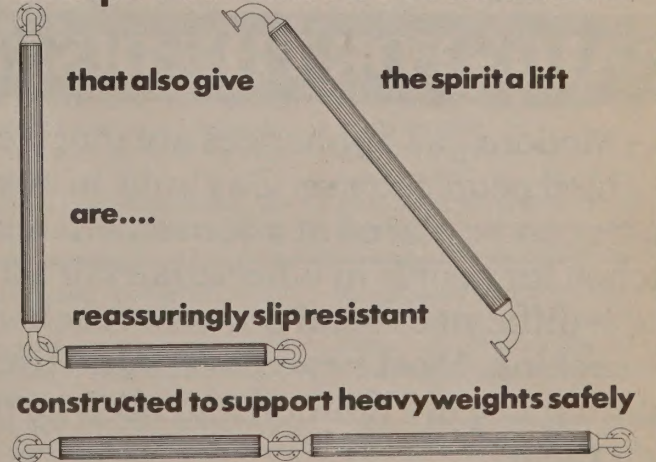
She also thinks SPOD should play a more active part with other voluntary organisations and contribute to the International Youth Year 1985. She supports the idea of a conference on personal relationships, sponsored by *Disability Now*.

"In 1985," she said, "we are going to put SPOD on the map."

SPOD, 286 Camden Road, London N7 0BJ. Tel: 01-607 8851/2.

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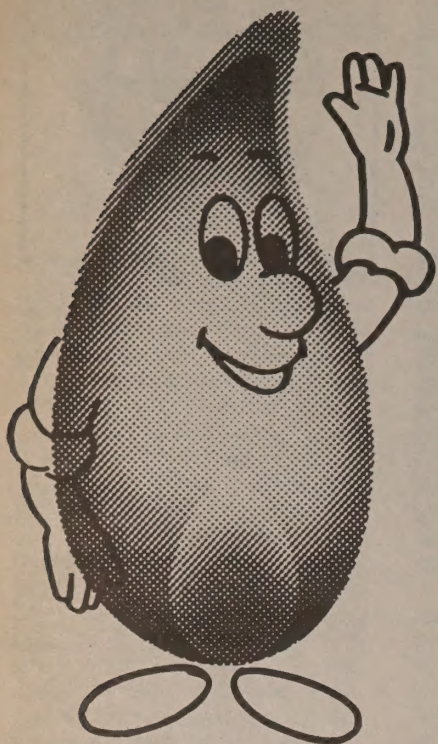


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"HELP FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED."

The gas people offer a wide range of help to those who need it most, particularly the elderly and disabled.

If you are elderly or disabled, here are some of the ways in which we can make life easier for you. If you know somebody who might benefit from these services, please pass the information to them.

FREE GAS SAFETY CHECKS

A free gas safety check on your gas appliances and installations is available if: *You are 65 or over and you live alone; You are a registered handicapped person of any age and you live alone.*

This free check includes any necessary adjustments as well as materials up to the cost of £2.50 (including VAT). You might have to pay for any additional work that needs to be done.

SERVICING AND LEAKS

Gas fires, water heaters and central heating systems all need servicing from time to time. All customers can be assured that their appliances are operating safely and efficiently if they have them serviced regularly by competent people.

You should also bear in mind that checking and making safe a suspected escape, and simple gas escape repairs will usually be free. Why? Because we do not charge for the first 30 minutes of work, nor will we charge for parts and materials up to the value of £1 installed during that initial visit. If you suspect a gas leak at home or in the street, report it at once. The phone is quickest — call the emergency number for your area, under "GAS" in the local telephone directory.

AIDS FOR THE DISABLED

Modern gas appliances are much easier for disabled people to use. Gas built-in ovens and hot-plates can be placed at a convenient height in the kitchen for people in wheelchairs or for people who find it difficult to bend down or reach up when they are cooking. Most new cookers and fires now have automatic spark ignition and need no matches to light them.

If you have a hand disability, you might find the controls on your cooker or gas fire difficult to operate.

British Gas has devised a range of special adaptors which should make life easier. There are four types of tap handles specially designed for cookers, each of which will fit many different models, and tap adaptors for many gas fires.

There is a nominal standard charge of £2 (plus VAT) per appliance for supplying and fitting adaptors to a new or existing appliance.

If you know someone who is blind or has failing sight, please tell them about braille controls for cookers and central heating. The clock controls which switch central heating on and off can be brailled. Special braille or studded controls are available for most gas cookers, together with a braille cooking chart.

ASK US TO HELP YOU

British Gas has a team of Home Service Advisers, who will call on disabled people at home and provide free advice on the use of gas. They can provide information about special adaptors and handles and advise on the choice of suitable appliances.

If you would like to contact the Home Service Advisers or to enquire about free gas safety checks, regular servicing for appliances or aids for the disabled, visit your local gas showroom or telephone the gas service centre (the phone number is under "GAS" in the local directory).

PAYING FOR GAS

The showroom can also tell you about easier ways to pay your gas bills, and how to get help if there is real hardship — ask for the Code of Practice, "Electricity and gas bills for your home."

BRITISH GAS



HELPFUEL SERVICES FROM THE GAS PEOPLE.

Education, employment and access — a Dutch viewpoint

Margaret Morgan talks to three people with disabilities

Holland is noted not only for windmills, tulips and cheeses, but also for its enlightened attitudes to disadvantaged people and for the services it offers to those with mental and physical disabilities.

Last summer I had a 3 week holiday in Utrecht with my friend Jessie van Dongen (author of *Invisible Barriers*, a book about pastoral care with physically disabled people.) I was interested to learn how attitudes and services have changed since my last visit in 1975.

We spent two enjoyable days with Dr Jan and Mrs Ria Lips outside The Hague.

Jan is a senior civil servant in the Ministry for Welfare, Public Health and Cultural Affairs, who in the past has been directly involved with providing facilities for disabled people. He is severely physically disabled through cerebral palsy, though his speech is unimpaired and he is fluent in English.

Because their flat is within ¼ mile of his office, Jan is able to use his electrically operated wheelchair to travel from home to work on his own.

I also spent some time with Casper van Dongen, Jessie's eldest step-grandson, now in his mid-20s, who has spina bifida.

Casper lives with his parents in Rotterdam and works in the Architects' Department. He is paid the normal rate for the post, though the costs are borne by central government through a grant to the local authority



Casper van Dongen

under one of the special schemes for providing employment for people with disabilities. Although he has limited mobility, public transport is difficult for Casper so he travels to work by taxi. His fares are repaid by the Welfare Department.

I met Truus Schouten too, a middle-aged lady with multiple sclerosis who has recently moved into a Fokus flat. Truus has had to give up work because of her increasing physical handicaps but she goes out every day in her electrically operated wheelchair accompanied by her large Dalmation dog.

I asked Jan and Casper for their views on education, employment, access and housing.

In the field of education, many more children with physical disabilities are now being integrated into mainstream schools. In fact, Casper van Dongen was the first disabled pupil in his local school, and he continued his education for several years to obtain his school-leaving diploma. He rode his tricycle to school and inside the building.

Although Jan Lips agreed that the number of children in special schools should be reduced and some special schools closed, he thought there would be very real problems in trying to integrate all children with disabili-

ties into mainstream schools as they are at present. Multi-handicapped and severely retarded children require, he believed, some "segregation" in order to obtain the special services that they need.

In Holland, educational provision is often linked directly to treatment in "rehabilitation" centres with a medical doctor in overall charge. Treatment is seen as the main priority by many parents and professionals and, in Jan's view, parents of severely disabled children will



Dr Lips returns from work.

continue to demand these units.

As in the UK, legislation has helped integration to only a limited extent, though in Holland additional finance is available to make school buildings accessible. Decisions about spending, however, are made at local level so implementation varies in different parts of the country.

Both Holland and the UK share common problems with unemployment. Jan and Casper agreed that the statutory 3 per cent quota of disabled employees is no longer effective as jobs are just not available.

Both countries have similar legislation. Sheltered workshops can be grant-aided; finance is also available for special tools, equipment and adaptations, and new schemes for providing work and subsidising wages have been introduced.

Casper thought that many disabled people dislike working in sheltered workshops and would prefer ordinary employment, even if they work only part time. He himself had family help in obtaining his present job and he feels that the scheme for paying wages from government funds should be extended.

Both Jan and Casper agreed that opportunities for employment should be made available to any disabled person who wants to work.

Neither Jan nor Casper considered that anti-discrimination legislation would be effective in the employment field. Jan believed that with more legislation there would be a high risk of worsening the situation for all disabled people because rigid criteria would be applied to specific groups. Casper pointed out that everyone is different and standard solutions will not meet everyone's needs.

Both had suggestions for improving public understanding and for changing attitudes towards minority groups.

Casper thought that disabled people should be more ready to talk spontaneously about their handicaps and explain when questions are asked; that more articles should be written by and about people with disabilities and talks given to a wide variety of audiences. He felt that one

must be able to take jokes against oneself without getting bitter.

He is a member of a Rotterdam rowing club for disabled people which is affiliated to an able-bodied rowing club. This gives him and his fellow club members opportunities to meet others on equal terms as well as benefitting from physical exercise and a sense of achievement and well-being.

We also discussed developments in housing and access.

There have been considerable improvements in access during the past 15 years, both inside buildings and on roads and pavements — not forgetting the bicycle tracks which are a special feature of all roads in Holland.

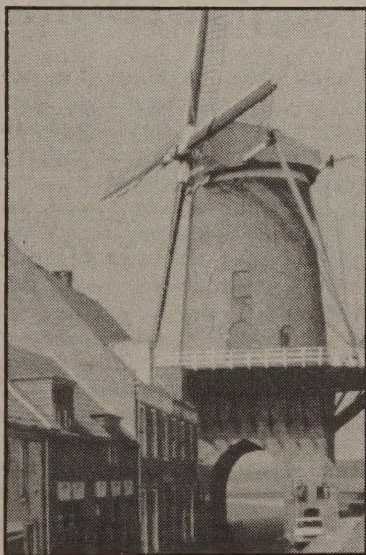
The care in the community programme, which is now being given priority by the government, is facing problems similar to those in the UK. There are insufficient skilled and experienced staff, suitable buildings and finance to implement the recommendations.

Jan is convinced that one of the most effective ways of enabling severely disabled people to become and remain independent is for the primary care team — community nurses, care assistants, home helps — to be responsible for personal and domestic support at home, at work or wherever disabled people are, by day and night. This back-up service, together with home adaptations, special housing and adequate financial support would allow many more people to remain at home.

A scheme like this might well have helped Truus. Instead she had to move to another district in Utrecht in order to live in a Fokus flat where emergency and personal help are available at all times.

Although Truus is grateful for this rare type of accommodation, she would not have chosen to live in a new housing development amongst people with whom she has little in common.

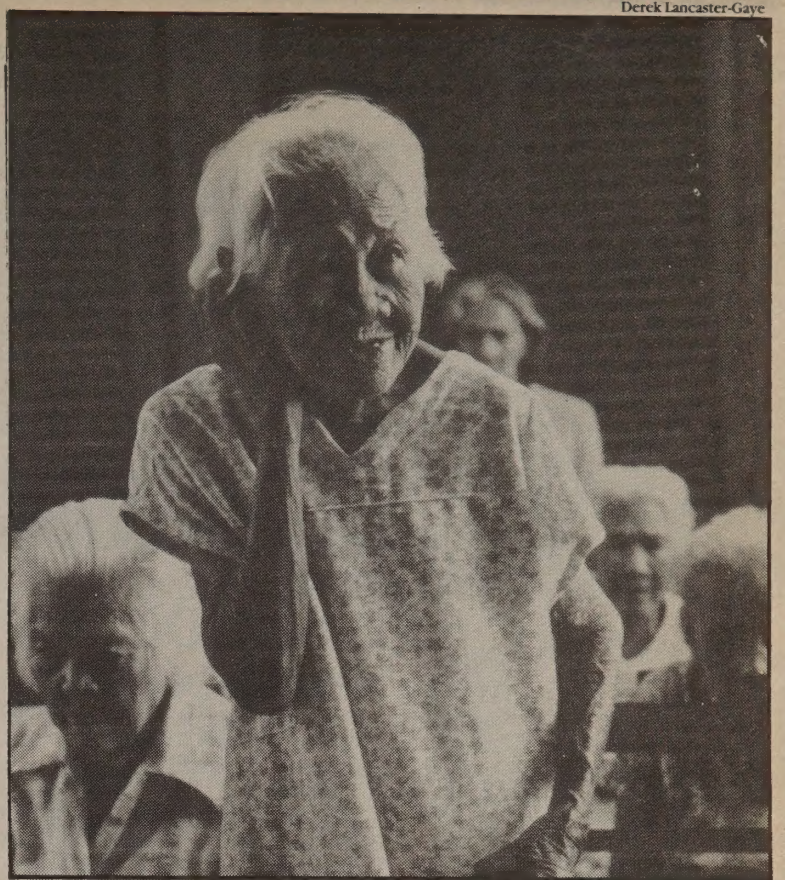
No description of special housing facilities in Holland would be complete without mention of Het Dorp — the Village — near Arnhem. It was one of



An unusual windmill near Utrecht.

the first housing developments in the world planned and built especially for men and women with severe disabilities.

Like many other pioneer developments it can now be criticised: it is much too large by modern standards and although planned as part of the local community it is some distance from the city centre and so seems a self-contained village.



An old lady at Negros Occidental in the Philippines.

Project 2000

CPO explores old age — with your help

Where are the elderly people who have cerebral palsy?

Statistically, there should be a large number in their 70s and 80s. Yet, surprisingly, this is something about which we appear to know very little and have only subjective judgments.

During my two years of international visits I sought the answer to this and another question — what impact does ageing have upon people suffering from cerebral palsy?

Few people professed to have any direct experience, and those who did were unable to give any realistic answer about the clinical implications or even about where the old cp people were. They did not know if they were living with relatives or in an institution, or whether they had died before their time.

It is now some 30 years since services geared to the needs of cp were first established in this country, Australia and North America. Later, similar services, usually inspired by parent organisations, grew up elsewhere. Not surprisingly, these services were concerned with children in the early stages, then with adolescents, then with adults.

Many of those identified as having cerebral palsy at that time will now be approaching "old age" and appropriate planning for their future should be considered. We ought to be concerned not only with cp persons whose disability has been catalogued, but with those who were too old to have been included in the services developed three decades ago and are now in their 60s and 70s.

Whether cerebral palsy induces a more limited life expectancy

than the cultural norms, or whether the problems of "old age" simply overtake the external signs of cp so that people are seen as "elderly" rather than as physically disabled is a matter of conjecture. But the facts of the matter are important, both to justify the treatment given earlier in life and the services provided, such as care, housing, employment and financial support.

We need to find out if the cp person's environment has any significant impact on longevity or deterioration: whether people living in the community with relative independence live longer or deteriorate less than those living in residential care or in hospital; whether meaningful employment contributes to a longer life and less deterioration.

It would be interesting to see if there is any evidence that cp people who have received extensive treatment in infancy have a different life expectancy from cp people who have not received regular treatment.

Cerebral Palsy Overseas is to take a closer look at the facts.

The World Health Organisation has agreed to sponsor a special project to assess the social, economic and clinical implications of cp in adulthood.

The preliminary study will examine the facts in the UK, Sweden and Austria. It will attempt to project the scale of the problem in the year 2000.

Where are those elderly cp people? Cerebral Palsy Overseas would very much like to hear from anyone, disabled or not, who can help.

Please write to Derek Lancaster-Gaye, Director, Cerebral Palsy Overseas, 37 Queen Anne Street, London W1M 9FB.

There have, however, been many changes. I was glad to see that a public restaurant, which had inevitably become more of a "viewing" point for visitors, has been closed and the building is now a social club for people in the village.

I asked Jan and Casper what they thought would most improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.

For Jan it was one local authority department combining health and welfare which,

through the primary care team, would provide consistent personal care as a matter of right whenever and however required.

For Casper it was a physical activity to improve morale and encourage integration through a common interest.

Although I did not ask Truus directly, I have the feeling that she would like people with disabilities to be seen as they really are and not judged by outward appearances.

Holidays Holidays Holidays Holidays Holidays



Merle Davies on the trail at Derwentwater.

Challenge in the Lake District

The Lake District is good at luring me back. Last year my marathon drive up the motorway with a friend was rewarded once again by unspoilt mountains interspersed with lovely lakes, each differing in size and character.

Our destination was Ireby, a small village 4 miles from Lake Basenthwaite, in the heart of the John Peel country. It is ideally suited for touring the lakes, the Caidbeck and Currock Fells or the Scottish border, as well as the Solway coast.

The Ladyswood Private Hotel accommodates about 12 guests and caters for families. Close to the house there are 3 annexe rooms adapted for wheelchair users with bathrooms that have grab-rails fitted beside the toilet and bath.

There is a full English breakfast and a five course dinner in the evening.

The hotel is more suitable for guests who enjoy a quiet after-dinner stroll and maybe a call into the local pub rather than dancing and entertainment. However, the Ladyswood does have its own licence, and there is a TV lounge, and table tennis in the basement (though this is inaccessible to wheelchairs). Pets, even horses, are welcome.

My fears of touring such a hilly area were soon dispelled by the surprisingly good provision for handicapped people in the area. Most of the major towns have joined RADAR's National Key Scheme for public toilets for disabled people and there is adequate parking for disabled drivers. A car is a "must", by the way,

and my driving ability was put to the test negotiating the steep, winding passes and the one track roads to the smaller tarns.

A number of stately homes and gardens are accessible to wheelchair users though due to their size we only got a glimpse of Beatrix Potter's Home Farm and Wordsworth's Dove Cottage.

Several walks and nature trails have been adapted, including a lovely one along the bank of Derwentwater, near Keswick.

The small National Trust Shop at Derwentwater was well-informed and helpful about local facilities.

We took a delightful boat trip on Ullswater with the help of some kind boatman. Ullswater itself has poor loo facilities, but the local hotel was welcoming. It was one of the easiest lakes to sit beside; others were difficult to reach without strong assistance.

Altogether the holiday was delightful, but exhausting!

Merle Davies
Holidays Advisor
The Spastics Society
Ladyswood Private Hotel, Ireby,
Cumbria CA5 1EX, tel: (09657) 482.

Access Guides are available for Carlisle and Keswick. Freedom of Cumbria gives details of all types of recreation plus places of interest to visit, and accommodation which has been inspected for access. 45p (including postage) from the Lake District National Park Information Service, Bank House, High Street, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 1AF. Tel: 096 62 2498.

A trip to the sun – and no problems

John and Elaine Roberts offer the fruits of their experience in taking disabled people on holiday

"Last Minute Bargain Offers." "Save £s." "Special Offers."

Just a few of the eye catching phrases used by travel agents to tempt you to part with your money for a few days in the sun.

But what can you expect? And what can you do to make sure your holiday comes up to expectation?

We hope that our experiences, reminiscences and hints will help you make your holiday easier to plan and prevent some of the snags that can so easily happen.

With the rising costs of high season holidays many people prefer to take an off-peak holiday which can save almost £50 a week. If you are wheelchair bound and have to pay for a helper, the saving can amount to almost £200 for a two-week holiday.

Any of the Mediterranean countries, the Greek islands or North Africa have climates that are ideal for winter holidays and from personal experience I can assure you that sunbathing in winter is a great pleasure!

When you book your holiday it pays to inform the tour operator of the exact kind and degree of handicap that the holiday makers have so that the operator is ready to cope and has enough helpers available.

It is also vital to ask about the hotel – the number of steps inside, the dimensions of the lift, the width of the bathroom door. Is the hotel on the flat? It's no good to you if it's up a steep slope or perched on top of a cliff. Foreign hotels are not designed with anyone other than able-bodied people in mind, and some have no lifts.

You should also state clearly to the tour operator any requirements you have and also decide

which airport you want to leave from. Gatwick and Heathrow are the major departure points and if you request special help ahead of time, you will receive it. However, if you are ambulant, be careful of the moving walkways: it's easy to lose your balance.

You may find a small, local airport is more convenient. Although you will have to pay a supplement, it's a small price to pay for not having to travel all the way to a major airport, and you won't have so far to walk either.

When you book the holiday you will be asked to pay a deposit and an insurance premium. The invoice follows 2 months before departure.

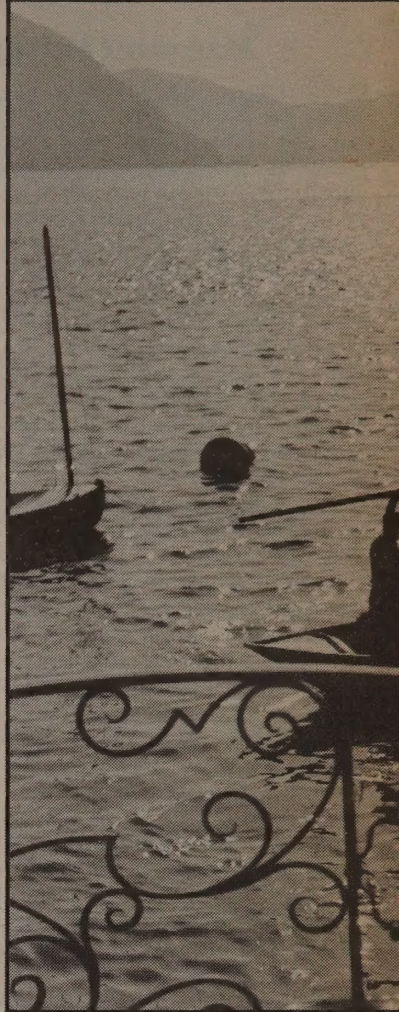
Check that your passport is in order in good time. A new one, either 10-year or a visitor's, can take 6 weeks to process in the rush periods.

It is preferable to take currency in the form of travellers' cheques because if they are lost or stolen they are easier to replace.

At last the big day comes. Make sure you get to the airport at least one and a half hours before departure. At the checking-in desk, don't forget to ask if you may pre-board – boarding the aircraft half-an-hour before anyone else. This may seem a long time, but those 30 minutes soon go.

Your jet will trundle to the start of the runway. The captain brakes, traffic control gives the magic words "Clear for take off", throttles are opened wide, the plane thunders down the runway and tilts upward. All of a sudden there is no noise at all – you're airborne and on your way to the sun.

During the flight you have to fill out a landing card, so keep your passport handy.



Sun sparkles on the water of Lago

When you arrive, avoid the mad rush to get off the plane. The captain will have radioed ahead with your requirements, so your progress to the terminal building will be smooth.

After passport control and immigration, the next step is transfer to the coach. This is where problems can occur. We well remember a young married couple in Palma. He was a well-built paraplegic and she was a slim, small young woman. The coach filled up and they were still outside. Had it not been for our helpers, they might still be there!

No one is paid to carry a handicapped person on to a coach; the courier is invariably female, and the driver unwilling. So make

Beware the steps of Rome

Eight days in Rome for two. Sounds great doesn't it? That's what I thought, but I am spastic, severely handicapped and confined to a wheelchair.

Everything went well last April on the journey from Wakes Hall near Colchester to Rome. The stewardesses were very kind to us.

But the welcome we received in Rome was anything but good. The coach hired by Citalia Holidays had several steps, and the driver let me on to the coach last. Then I had to be helped all the way to the back seat and by the time I got there I was exhausted.

The Albani hotel was very nice, even though the bar was inaccessible and the bathroom door too narrow for a wheelchair; we found a fridge full of drink when we arrived.

Steps were the big problem everywhere. All the museums we tried to get into had them. At the Vatican my friend asked a priest to give us a hand up the steps to St Peters, which he did, grudgingly. Inside, St Peters is a wonderful sight, but outside it's filthy and could have done with a good scrub – and that could be



Eric Barnes pauses on his way to the Coliseum. No steps yet!

said about the whole of Rome.

We would have seen more places if we had had another helper, but if you asked anyone they would look at you as if you shouldn't have been there. So if you are handicapped and thinking of going to Rome, take 2 people to help.

Eric Barnes

Malta for the individual

After many group holidays abroad I fancied having an individual holiday. Through Threshold Travel I chose to go to Malta for 10 days last March, to the Seabreeze Hotel which caters for disabled people.

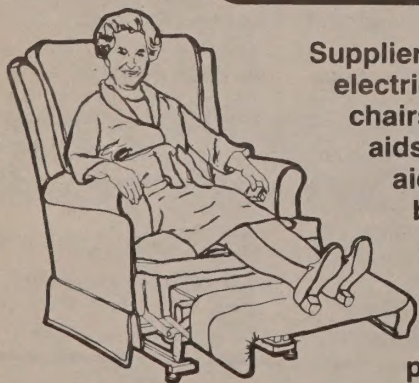
When we arrived at Heathrow there was a courier standing on the kerb with my helper's name across his chest. He took us to the airport. After checking in, I was driven out to the plane and put in a small canvas chair to be carried up the steps.

Three hours later we arrived in Malta. A fork lift was brought out to the plane and I and my helper went on it. Outside the airport there was a taxi waiting to take us to the hotel.

A small lift took us up to our apartment – a twin bedroom with toilet and bathroom adjoining. Although I have a speech impediment the hotel staff understood quite well and I could choose from the menu myself.

On the first day a lady courier came to see us and suggested all sorts of outings. We went to Gozo, a little island just off Malta, where we saw lace making, stopped at a restaurant for lunch and saw various places of interest.

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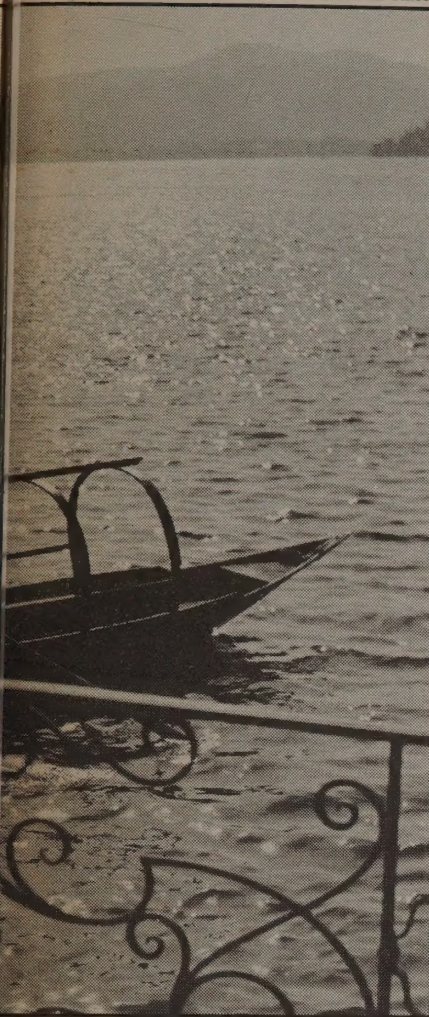
DN 27

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Holidays Holidays Holidays Holidays Holidays

Italian State Tourist Office



in Italy.

sure that if you need a helper, he or she is strong enough to do the lifting.

Your holiday is what you make it. But we would suggest that you see as much of the country as possible. You can sit on the beach in Blackpool - why do it abroad?

Sunbathe by all means, but in moderation. Drink by all means, but don't forget that the bars may be open all day, the measures are bigger and the plonk - in spite of the ice - is lethal. One of the favourite drinks on all our holidays has been hot chocolate!

By the way, if you are disabled, be prepared for people to stare at you in Spain, Majorca or Tunisia and take no notice.

Shopping is an essential part of the holiday, but you must be ready to haggle. Spaniards, Arabs, Italians, all enjoy bargaining. Start low and work your way up. Beware of the gypsies who haunt the beach: they sell junk.

Places to go? Spain, Majorca, Rome, Belgium, Holland, all have their attractions, but Spain and Majorca have a special place in our memory.

One of the most suitable hotels in Majorca is the Los Mirlos in Palma Nova. It has no steps at all, and the dining room, lounge, bar and other daytime amenities are on the ground floor. An excellent lift service whisks you to your bedroom

Bill Hargreaves



pit of Delft to take home? Part of the fun of Holland.



g - Joan Chandler and her helper.

The Shrine of the Blessed Virgin has the third largest dome in the world. During the last war the church was full of people when a bomb dropped right through the dome but did not explode.

Gozo was much more cultivated than Malta. What fascinated me was that wherever you looked there was a forest of TV aerials - very high - which rather spoil the look of the landscape.

I also went to the town of Medina which is mentioned in the Bible. None of the towns we visited allowed traffic; we had to walk through the narrow streets.

which is spacious. The only drawback - as with so many hotels - is a bathroom entrance which is too small for a wheelchair.

Palma Nova is a delightful town, flat, with plenty of English food, restaurants and pubs - an ideal centre for a holiday. Two weeks in March on full board costs about £200.

The Express at Calella on the Costa Dorada is well known to many handicapped people because it was used by The Spastics Society in the days of the Recreational Services Department. The proprietors, Jo and Jaime Gamell, certainly know how to provide a great holiday at a price everyone can afford.

Further afield, the Sahara Beach at Monastir in Tunisia is another hotel well worth visiting.

The Westminster in Ostend is also experienced at providing holidays for handicapped people.

If you really want to splash out, then try the Dona Filipa at Vale de Lobo in the Algarve. Winter prices vary from £310 to £529 a fortnight for bed and breakfast, to which must be added about £240 for full board. It's unashamed luxury at an unashamed price. There are dearer hotels, but not much better.

Memories we have by the hundred. Who walked fully clothed into the Med - for the experience - or so we were told? Who got stuck in the bath and had bottles of suntan lotion poured over her and 4 of us working as a human block and tackles to get her out? My back has never been the same!

For many people it was their first trip out of the country. Others were experienced travellers. But everyone seemed to acquire lasting memories.

If all this has whetted your appetite for a holiday in the sun and you would like more specific advice, let us know. Happy holidays!

John Roberts is Senior Regional Officer for the Society's West Region. Tel: (0272) 276689.

Our flight home was delayed for 24 hours so we were accommodated at the Grand Hotel Excelsior. It was a lovely hotel but not suitable for disabled people. When I got to the lift my chair would not go through the door, but we had made friends with a young doctor and his fiancée and he took me in his arms and folded the chair up so as to get it in the lift.

Eventually we got home and my driver was waiting to meet me.

It was a lovely holiday, and a wonderful experience.

Joan Chandler

Information

Texas, Vienna and Yugoslavia, as well as activity holidays for physically handicapped people. Threshold Travel Ltd, 2 Whitworth Street West, Manchester M1 5WX, tel: 061 236 9763.

The Chalfont Line organises group and individual holidays for disabled people, their family and friends. Normally the cost of a helper must be borne by the disabled person, but early in 1985 two holidays will include helpers provided free of charge. For individual holidaymakers, there is a pick-up service operating within a wide radius of London to and from Heathrow. Brochure available. Chalfont Line Holidays Information, c/o Kings

Arms Service Station, Rickmansworth Road, Harefield, Middx, tel: Harefield 4860.

Project Phoenix Trust is a registered charity operating overseas study tours for disabled people. In 1985, for example, holidays are planned in Amsterdam and Bruges on the theme of art history and general interest, and in Athens on classical studies. Contact Mrs V Saunders, 68 Rochfords, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes MK6 5DJ.

Disabled Safaris is a new 12-day all-inclusive tour of Kenya starting in June 1985. £979.00. For further information contact Graeme Shaw, Disabled Safaris, Wings Holidays, Groups Department, 57/59 High Road, Broxbourne, Herts EN10 7JD, tel: (0992) 87277.



Mary Tomlin finds a novel leaning post in Jerusalem.

Making friends in Israel

I know lots of disabled people dream of going on holiday abroad and feel they would go if they could have all the details taken care of for them. So I am writing to tell you of the holiday I took with my severely spastic son, Stephen, aged 31, last year.

We went on a group holiday (24 people, 10 of them in wheelchairs) to Israel with Threshold Travel.

We had a fantastic time.

We were sent lots of literature about health precautions and care on the plane and in airports. Important requirements like being able to get through doors into the bathroom and toilet, and very comfortable beds were met.

The hotel was lovely with beautiful gardens and a swimming pool for those who could use it. Lots of nice food and a kind staff. All the other guests were friendly, and entertainment was provided.

We travelled to the Holy Places where we were given helping hands by other visitors of every colour and creed. Our guide made the ancient places so real to us and also helped us to understand the country's present difficulties.

When we heard "Silent Night" this Christmas, we were in spirit down in the grotto in the Church



Stephen and Mary Tomlin meet a paper-seller in Tel Aviv.

of the Nativity in Bethlehem where we stood by the manger and sang that carol with an American group.

It took much hard saving up of Mobility money and pocket money and presents by Stephen (who had to pay for me as well) but it was worth all the effort and self-denial.

We are truly grateful to the company who took us and appreciate the help and kindness of the representatives.

We hope to go again with them once we have saved up enough!

Mary Tomlin



Cooling off in the River Jordan.

Tiring on the feet!

One Sunday last May I met 29 people at Gatwick Airport (one of them in a wheelchair). Together we flew to Tel Aviv for an 8 day tour of the Holy Land organised by Lionheart Tours.

After a night's sleep, it was into our air-conditioned coach and off up the west coast of the Mediterranean to Caesarea, Haifa and Acre, stopping at each place for a quick look round.

Then we went across the north of Israel to Tiberias, where we stayed for 2 nights at the Ganei Hamat Hotel which overlooks the Sea of Gallilee. We took a boat trip on the Sea.

Next we went to Cana and Nazareth, and on Wednesday we visited Capernam before turning south to Jerusalem. On the way went through the desert, stopping at Jericho and at Qumran to see the ruins. It was very hot out there!

In Jerusalem we stayed at the Windmill Hotel, visited Bethlehem and Bethany from there and explored the city itself. I remember especially the evening we sent to the folk club, seeing the girls and boys dancing and singing, and one of our group going on stage.

We didn't get back to Gatwick until 2.30 am on Monday morning.

It was a "holiday of a lifetime", but very tiring on your feet. We were on the go from 8.30 am til 5 or 6 pm every day to see as much as possible.

John Turner
Editor of Maidstone
Spastics Group Newsletter

Lionheart Tours, 66 Stamford Hill, London N16. Tel: 01-806 0991.

Holidays continued on page 11

The Spastics Society's Holidays Advisor, Merle Davies, is ready to answer any questions about holidays and short-term care. She can supply up-dated holiday information sheets on holiday and short-term care facilities (personal or available); holiday facilities (le or no personal help); holiday facilities for handicapped children (including short-term care); adventure type holidays for handicapped children and young adults; and self-catering facilities. Available free from Family Services and Assessment Centre, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ, tel: 01-387 9571. Threshold Travel which operates group or individual holidays, has recently published its 1985 brochure. Includes holidays in Florida.

LOCAL
GROUP
NEWS



Edited by Simon Crompton

Unique Trowbridge hostel opens



At the opening (left to right): Brigadier Trevor Mossman, Admiral Sir William O'Brien who unveiled a plaque; Martin Price, Secretary of the group, and Derek Warren.

A unique project to help disabled young people get a better education has been completed in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, the culmination of 4 years planning and fundraising.

Funded by the Bath and District Spastics Society, the Elizabeth Lodge Hostel has been built to provide accommodation for up to 10 disabled students attending Trowbridge Technical College. It cost £220,000.

The college provides some of the best facilities for disabled people in the country, but up to now many students have had to travel long distances to get to college. The new hostel is only

200 yards away. Brigadier Trevor Mossman, Chairman of the Bath and District Spastics Society, believes Trowbridge Technical College compares favourably with any other University. "And in the new hostel all the students have their own very comfortable bedsitter/study," he says. There are also hoists and adaptations for wheelchairs. It will be managed by The Shaftesbury Society. "The hostel is the only one in this part of the country and I believe it's the first of its kind anywhere in Britain," says Trevor Mossman.

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DN 1/85

A centre for participation

Having raised £10,000 towards the new Northfields Day Centre, the Mid-Staffordshire Spastics Association is determined to continue injecting money and resources.

It wants it to be, in the words of Welfare Chairman Betty Cartman, "a centre in which to do things, not to be looked after."

By the middle of next year the Association will have spent a further £3,000 on a greenhouse and a computer for the social services-run centre in Stafford.

"We feel there should be more than the normal day care facilities here," says Betty Cartman.

"We want the general participation of clients to make it busy and alive," she says.

She believes a computer is important because many young people coming from special schools already have some ex-

perience. Further tuition could help them get jobs.

She also hopes that the woodwork and pottery facilities will encourage able-bodied people to come to the centre.

The Northfields Centre in Stone Road was opened on 7 November. It was converted from a primary school at a cost of £169,000, using £50,000 raised by the local newspaper, the Ruth Dickson Trust, Farmers in Action and the Mid-Staffs Spastics Association.

It will provide 60 places and a far wider range of facilities than was available at the old prefabricated day centre in Stafford.

The Association has been assured by the manager of the centre, Keith Yardley, that he will try to provide any special service that its clients need. There will be places for all the Association's members.

The Association took Keith Yardley to visit the Reginald Crocutt Centre in Stoke to show him how clients can participate in running a centre and he is proving very interested in their ideas.

So even though the Association has no direct say in how Northfields is run, Betty Cartman is hoping they can exert their influence quietly.

"We're a pressure group with strong ideas on what we want," she says.

"Mr Yardley is a bit more forward-looking and exploring than many people. We all want to get the community involved."



Bill Hargreaves gives one of the patients his present. Hermin Samuel, Vice Chairman of the Brent Group stands behind and on the right are the Wong family, members of the group.

Santa goes to hospital

The Brent Association for CP People and those with Related Disorders has "adopted" a ward in a long-stay mental handicap hospital.

And at the group's most recent visit on 15 December they held a Christmas party – something most of the patients had never experienced before.

Each received a toy from Father Christmas, alias Chairman Bill Hargreaves, a Christmas cracker and some Christmas cake. Entertainment was provided by a singing group called The Acorns.

"It really was a tremendous experience to watch the faces of the patients, and see the look of disbelief on the faces of the nurses," says Bill Hargreaves. "Previously people hadn't thought of anything like it because of the severe nature of their disorders."

The 29 patients in Children's Ward C4 at Harperbury Hospital in Hertfordshire rarely, if ever, get visitors.

The "children" have a physical age of 18-26, but a mental age of 2½. Around half of them have cerebral palsy.

"We hope that, eventually, closer relationships will grow, but it's obviously very difficult," says Bill Hargreaves.

The Group's first task, when they started visiting 6 months ago, was not just to make friends with the patients but also to gain the confidence of the nursing staff.

"We're now receiving enormous co-operation from the nursing staff," says Bill Hargreaves. "And the volunteer organiser told me that we had done more for morale in the hospital than they would have thought possible."

VIEWPOINT



Valerie Lang

Last year I went on a group holiday for disabled people. Although this was not a holiday run by The Spastics Society, nearly all of us had cerebral palsy. I was not alone in having a speech defect. Certainly I did not anticipate that this would present any problems, as I assumed that on such a specialised holiday the helpers would be used to coping with somewhat unclear speech.

I was wrong. Later, when I told the organiser that I would not be going on another holiday because I had been upset by a number of people failing to comprehend me and walking away while I was in mid-sentence, he said that I was just getting "old and crotchety".

Although the problem lasted only 3 or 4 days – after which a sympathetic listener spread the word and no-one failed to comprehend me – the memory lingers painfully. I can only explain why I am so sensitive about people failing to understand what I say by going back to my childhood.

When I first learned to speak, it was only in vowel sounds. It was not surprising, therefore, that only my family could interpret them. By the time I went away to school at 7½, I could make myself understood to the (extremely skilled) staff. Later,

They walked away while I was in mid-sentence

Valerie Lang describes the indignities of not being understood

at 14, when I changed schools, I still had to work hard to make my new contemporaries comprehend. Later still I managed in the much larger environments of tech and university. Nevertheless I continued to approach strangers with trepidation. There was a good chance that they would not have a clue what I was saying.

It was only a couple of years ago, after speaking at a meeting at Buckingham Palace and making a very brief appearance on a television discussion programme, that I found that I was expecting to be understood.

It is bad enough not being understood when you sound entirely clear to your own ears. What is infinitely worse is the assumption people make when they can't understand – that you are not saying anything worth hearing. They also assume that so long as they make a well-meaning response, you will be quite happy whether or not it is appropriate.

For example, a few years ago, when I was in my late 30s, my family entertained a couple to lunch on Christmas day. Although we had not met, I was aware that they would have been told all about me – that I had a university degree, a good job, my own flat and so on. Well, they came to lunch and stayed to tea. During those 5 or 6 hours they were very kind to me, in the way that they would have been to a bright 4 year old. When they were leaving, the wife turned to me, gave me a bright beaming smile and said, "Goodbye. You must come and see us in the summer with your Mummy and Daddy."

I object to being thought men-

tally handicapped, and I imagine that many mentally handicapped people dislike being seen as children. We do have ideas, and no-one likes to have his or her ideas dismissed out of hand.

To put it another way, it is bad enough being disabled without people crediting you wrongly with a second handicap as well.

Very occasionally my odd-sounding speech frightens young children. In fact I tend to warn parents that their babies may cry. Somehow they are disturbed by the pitch of my voice.

Things became really embarrassing on a plane recently when the computer allocated me a seat next to an unaccompanied child of 6 or 7. As soon as I opened my mouth she dissolved into tears – and went on wailing until I persuaded the stewardess to move me away. This turned out to be quite difficult as the plane was full and by the time the stewardess appeared I was too tense to be understood easily by anyone!

I have tried to show the indignities experienced when there is an inappropriate response to poor speech. A very great deal of hurt can be caused. While my speech has improved a great deal over the years, and my confidence increased with the improvement, incidents occur just often enough to keep that confidence almost permanently dented.

If there are communication difficulties it really is important to the person that he or she is given time and attention. This applies whether or not someone is mentally as well as physically handicapped. We know that our speech is slow – but however much we would like to be able to do so, we can't speed it up.

Holidays Holidays Holidays

Continued from page 9

I never thought I would even see London before 1965, the year I came to Wakes Hall. If anybody had told me in those days that I would go to America, I would have said they were out of their mind.

On my way to Heathrow Airport in early October, I was very excited and had no fear of the aeroplane.

The day after we landed in New York, David Driver, my housefather, collected our hired car, a Buick Century. When I saw it I was so moved I almost cried to think that after all I have been through, I have done what I always wished to do but never thought would come my way.

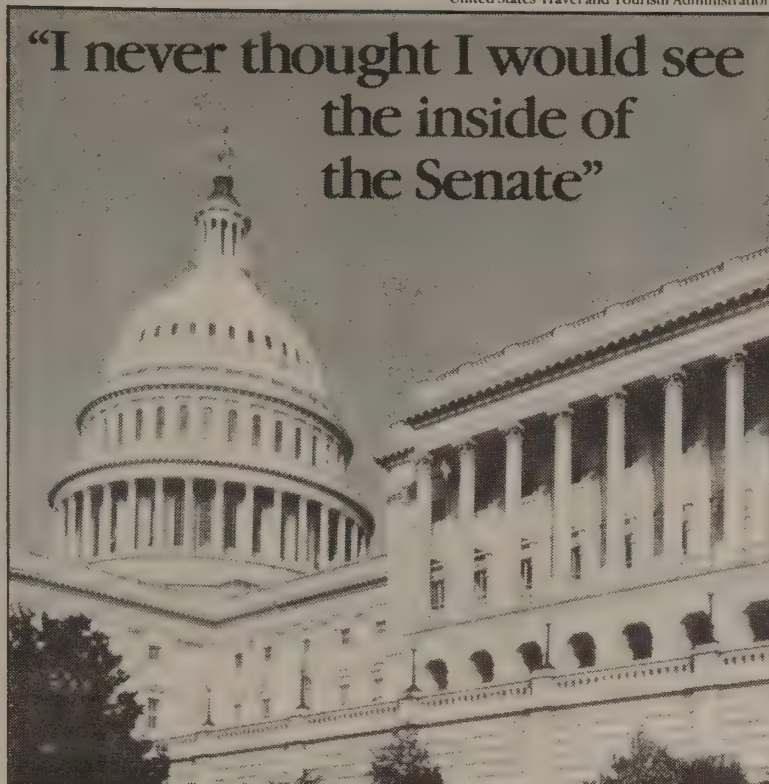
Travelling on the motorway to New Jersey I was struck dumb at trees of all colours. At one time I counted 7 shades of green and then there were pink, brown and even purple.

We spent 3 days in Yellow Springs with the brother of Paul Robinson (another helper) and his wife. We met many of their family and I can say I was made very welcome by all of them. We went to the Air and Space Museum which brought back many memories of when I used to hear the German planes overhead.

We went on to Virginia where we came to the Blue Ridge Mountains. It is similar to the scenery of Devon and Cornwall, but more beautiful. The view from each gap in the mountains was something I can't describe. You need to go and see it for yourself. I think they were called Blue Ridge Mountains because they blend with the blue sky.

Virginia is a big state. In fact, nearly all the states are big compared to Britain. Even the motorways are more interesting than they are here. As I left Virginia, I never knew what was coming up next, but my mind was always

United States Travel and Tourism Administration



"I never thought I would see the inside of the Senate"

ready for anything.

When we arrived in Washington, our first thought was to go and see the White House. But we found it was shut to the public, so we could only look at it through the railings. All round the grounds were high iron railings and every few yards there were guards.

I never thought I would see inside the Senate. The thing that struck me was that everywhere was accessible to disabled people and everywhere gave me the impression that they were taken care of.

We went on to Arlington Cemetery where I saw John F. Kennedy's grave. What makes people notice it is the flame burning in the centre. There were lots of people taking photographs and we took one too.

We spent 2 days in New York

at the Travel Inn Motor Lodge. David took me nearly all round New York in my wheelchair. To my idea, the city is better at night when it is all lit up, and it was just as warm at night as during the day.

The Rockefeller Centre was lit up and whatever you hear about it or see illustrated, it won't do it justice.

We visited the Empire State Building which has 96 floors. The cars below looked like toys. We also visited the US Intrepid, a big aircraft carrier from which we could see views of New York. Paul's brother took us all along the coastline of Long Island.

On 19 October we had to say goodbye to our lovely car and prepare to come home. It was a fortnight's holiday I will never forget.

Ken Warden

A new lease of life

Chris Davies is sitting comfortably – for the first time

Wheelchair users like me are probably resigned to the restrictions of their chairs, convinced that armchairs are impractical.

Armchairs are generally so stiff that I cannot relax into them. Or they are soft but vast so that I become engulfed, the chair giving my ever mobile cp body enough room to put me in undignified, uncomfortable and sometimes precarious positions. Bluntly, armchair manufacturers do not cater for me.

Naidex '84 changed all this. There I found Parker Care. It is a subsidiary of Parker Knoll, manufacturing a Danish inventor's system of basic models with endless variations which combine to produce a tailor-made armchair.

After some investigations, I discovered a product which could transform my lifestyle.

The Parker Care system includes five basic models, five variations of seats, five types of backs, five variations of upholstery for head, neck and arms, seven types of wheels and castors, plus leg rests, trays and tables. Seats and backs are adjust-

able either to different angles or are made to a specific tilt. All this amounts to more versatility than ever before, aided by a measuring chair which ensures customised products.

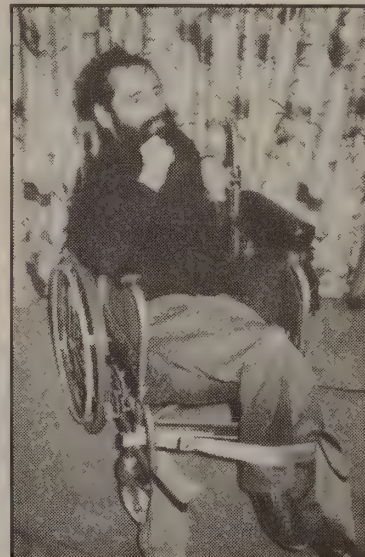
This is a genuine consumer report as I have bought a Parker Care chair. It has raised and padded arms, tilted seat, castors and body-supports. It enables me to sit unaided in complete comfort for the first time ever. I look and feel more relaxed and much freer. I also feel more akin to my fellow man.

This system is not cheap – the basic chair costs £124, without extras – but it is well worth it. Each chair is individually made, and since complete manufacturing only begins this month, don't expect one immediately.

Parker Care plans to have nationwide assessment centres, but initially retailers will have only two models on show. Consult the brochure for full details.

Parker Care, PO Box 22, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 5DJ. Tel: (0494) 21144

Simon Crompton



Before – Chris Davies sitting in his DHSS wheelchair.



After – the new relaxed Chris in his Parker Care armchair.

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A new benefit for some long-term sick and disabled people.

Our leaflet explains who's eligible.

Some long-term sick and disabled people will now be able to claim a new benefit if they are unable to work and don't qualify for Sickness or Invalidity Benefit.

The new benefit is called Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA for short), and is worth £21.50 a week, tax free. It does not depend on National Insurance contributions, and doesn't involve a means test.

SDA replaces Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension (NCIP) and Housewives' Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension (HNCIP). Everyone who used to receive NCIP or HNCIP will have been transferred to SDA automatically.

One of the main differences between SDA and the previous benefits is that married women will be able to claim SDA even if they are able to carry out normal household duties.

People who have been incapable of work since before their 20th birthday can qualify for SDA

**Severe
Disablement
Allowance**

for people
who are unable
to work
because of
severe mental
or physical
disablement



simply on that basis. Those who become incapable of work later in life must also be severely disabled to qualify.

People aged 50 or over and those aged 16 to 34 can get SDA now.

Those aged 35 to 49 cannot get SDA until November 1985 but may still be able to claim NCIP or HNCIP if they met the conditions before November 29, 1984.

Pick up a copy of the SDA leaflet at your local social security office or fill in the coupon below and send it to DHSS Leaflets Unit, P.O. Box 21, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1AY.

Please send me the explanatory leaflet and claim form for:
Severe Disablement Allowance ☐ NCIP ☐ HNCIP ☐
Tick the one(s) you want (please allow 21 days for delivery).

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OUTLOOK

Motoring

Tough on the streets but easy on the driver

Starting this month, a specially adapted Renault 11 with power steering and a sliding door will be available for Renault dealers nationwide to show to potential customers who have a disability. Furthermore, Renault UK has joined Assistance and Independence for Disabled People (AID). So it was with great interest that I tested the Renault 11 automatic.

The original advertising called it the car that's "tough on the streets" and certainly that was my first impression of this well-designed French model.

The recessed grip-type door handles are ideal for somebody who has trouble pushing buttons. Inside, it is spacious and uncluttered, with thick cloth seats and quality carpets.

Unfortunately, the seats in the automatic model are heavily contoured which would make sliding in from a wheelchair difficult. But once in the seat, the upper part of the body is held firmly which makes it very suitable for people with athetoid cp.

All the main controls are on stalks from the steering column, and other controls are on large, easily operated rocker switches.

The steering wheel is large and open, and since the seat tilts as well as sliding backwards and forwards, a very comfortable driving position can be

achieved.

The front windows are electrically operated which is not a luxury if you have trouble winding them up.

The heated rear window is curved which I found made parking easier.

On the road, the steering is light in spite of the front-wheel drive, and the smooth automatic gearbox allows the car to nip in and out of traffic even though it has only a 1300 cc engine.

Like most hatch-backs there is a high rear sill, 34 in, which would make it difficult to lift in a folded wheelchair. But once in, storage is made easier because the rear seat splits into 2 folding halves.

For anyone who finds it difficult to use keys, Renault has a unique remote control locking system which comes as an extra with this model. It will unlock the car from the outside without using a key and allows the driver to lock all 4 doors without having to walk round the car.

The Renault 11 would be ideal, I think, for an experienced disabled driver who wants to

move on to a larger, more luxurious car that is still easy to handle.

Technical specifications

1397 cc engine with twin choke carburettor giving 68 B.N.P. to a 3 speed automatic gearbox driving the front wheels.

Fuel consumption

At constant 56 mph 45.6 mpg
At constant 75 mph 36.2 mpg
Urban cycle 34.4 mpg

Cost

Basic price £5133.11
Less 16 per cent if purchased through AID (£821.30)
Car tax/delivery charge/number plates £140.00
VAT @ 15 per cent £667.77
Final total £5119.58
Extra for remote door locking and tinted windows £195.00

(AID requires a 10 per cent deposit on a car of this price but payment can be taken over 5 years whether you receive Mobility Allowance or not.)

Details from Old Oak Motor Company Ltd, Enfield, tel: 01-367 3456, or from Keith Baker, Renault UK, Western Avenue, London W3, tel: 01-992 3481, who deals exclusively with cars adapted for disabled people.

John Byworth



The Renault 11 Auto.

Books

Keeping fit while caring

by Christine Darby
(Family Welfare Enterprises, 501/5 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AV, £2.95 which includes postage and packing)

This book shows methods of moving disabled people and describes how the carer can do this while protecting his or her own health.

The lifting techniques are explained clearly and well illustrated with photographs. The chapter on how the disabled person can best assist with a transfer is also good, with detailed instructions, and there is a useful chapter on keep fit exercises for the carer.

Unfortunately the rest of the book does not maintain this standard.

In the section about alternatives to full time caring, important options are missed out, such as respite care and care attendants, and the information which is given is often incomplete.

The section on coping with injury caused by lifting suggests you bypass medical treatment and improvise home treatment, which could be dangerous. And the section on reducing stress concentrates on relaxation techniques but does not suggest other methods or, indeed, that you should try to deal with the cause.

While the equipment chapter shows how several items for transfers can be adapted to individual needs, it would have also helped to know the range of equipment that can make caring easier.

Overall, there is a negative

attitude towards help from the NHS and other supporting bodies. The author suggests that it is best not to look for help because there is none to be had.

A useful reference book on lifting techniques, but I would be very cautious about taking its advice on stress, fitness or the treatment of injury.

Eleanor Hughes

VAC Occupational Therapist

Corrigan

by Caroline Blackwood
(William Heinemann, hard-back £8.95)

Beware of dustjacket blurb. Corrigan purported to be "tantalising and enthralling"; a mystery which explored the "complexities and ironies of human relationships".

It proved to be a disappointing catalogue of stereotyped characters and an unbelievable plot.

A "gaunt and handsome" Irishman in a wheelchair one day turns up at the home of Mrs Blunt. The lonely widow is quickly drawn to Corrigan's charm and impressed by his resolute determination to raise funds for the charitable institution in which he once lived. She is drawn to the cause and so finds a new purpose in her life and a valued friendship in Corrigan, much to the bewilderment of her daughter and the scepticism of her housekeeper, the uncouth Mrs Murphy.

Who is the mysterious Corrigan? I soon became too irritated by the implausible characters and incredible storyline to care. We discover he is a fraud, playing upon an assumed disability to swindle money from those he meets.

But although he is a cheat he does bring valuable changes,

both directly and indirectly, to the lives of those he meets. Isolated and emotionally "crippled" individuals find new purpose and fulfilment.

What irritated me most was the stereotyping of people, particularly disabled people, who were seen as dependent upon charitable institutions for help, expressing humble gratitude for the aid that came their way, and always as "cripples" or "the disabled."

An object lesson for 1985 on how not to write about disability.

Kathy Johnson

Look out for . . .

John Cox and other representatives from voluntary organisations are answering questions put by disabled people on LINK, Central TV, 6 January, 11 am.

PATH Productions (Practical Arts and Theatre with the Handicapped) present *A Christmas Carol*, adapted from the story by Charles Dickens, at the Jeannetta Cochrane Theatre, Southampton Row, London, 15-19 January. Box office, tel: 01-359 7866 or 01-252 7040

Nabil Shaban, co-founder of GRAEAE, will be appearing in a *Dr Who* series on BBC 1 late January, early February.

Churchtown Farm field studies centre is featured in a film on LINK, Central TV, 3 February.

Jeffrey Tate, who is to be Principal Conductor at Covent Garden from 1986, is conducting the English Chamber Orchestra in Mozart symphonies Nos 36 and 38 at Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, on 15 February. He will conduct an all Mozart programme at the Royal Festival Hall on 12 March.

Theatre

Frankenstein

Anyone who went to Graeae Theatre Company's production of *Frankenstein* at The Place last month expecting to witness diabolical deeds performed at midnight in murky graveyards and laboratories with an abundance of gothic atmosphere, was in for a major surprise. For this was not "Frankenstein" a la Hammer Horror, but "Frankenstein the True Story", as written by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley – the classic tale of creation turned creator, and the tragic consequences of the irresponsible pursuit of science.

The play, like the book, is in two halves: the first is dominated by the eponymous scientist, while in the second his monster takes over the spotlight, as the roles of slave and master are reversed.

The narrative progresses in a series of short scenes, with the six-person cast playing a number of different characters. This approach greatly assisted the pace of the production, but could also create some confusion as one event followed another without any time to assimilate the action. Furthermore, with the exception of the excellent Jim Gibbins, the cast lacked the versatility that the approach demanded.

My main criticism, however, lies not with the performers, but, more fundamentally, with the choice and treatment of the source material. In her introduction to the novel *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley makes it quite plain that her main interest is in the moral issues – the book contains many didactic passages – and the dramatic events are touched upon only briefly. The creation of the monster, the numerous deaths, the destruction of the monster's mate are all covered perfunctorily in a few paragraphs. It is a book of reported action. While this is quite acceptable on the page, something more is required to translate literature into effective



Jim Gibbins in *Frankenstein*.

theatre. The virtue therefore in a "faithful adaptation" – such as Geoff Parker's here – seems to me to be extremely dubious.

The play worked best where the adaptor took on the role of dramatist and introduced his own, peripheral characters to add colour and humour to the narrative. Other attempts at dramatising the material were not so successful however – the monster's mime, for instance, at the start of the second half was neither precise nor imaginative enough to hold the attention, and was not helped by the muffled talkover soundtrack.

Overall, despite solid performances from Hamish McDonald as Frankenstein, and Tim Barlow as his creation, and an interesting musical score by Isobel Ward and Mark Glentworth, the production was disappointing – failing with its bare set and unambitious lighting to truly create a sense of "this alien world" or to bring out the poignant theme of alienation underlying the text. Perhaps a little touch of that gothic atmosphere might have helped . . .

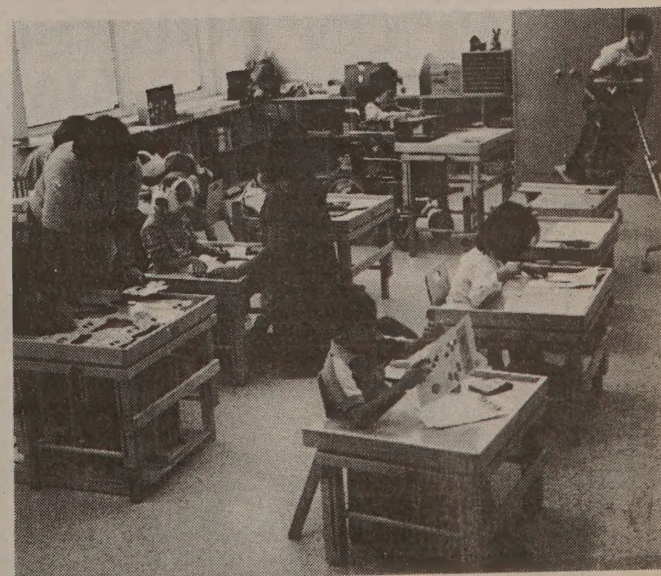
Alan Durant

Publicity and Film Officer

Through January and February *Frankenstein* is touring in London, Brentford, Cambridge, Peterborough, Mansfield, Chesterfield, Northampton, Winchester and Stevenage. For further information, tel: 01-935 5588



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Simon Crompton

Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

Getting to the AGM

"A question was raised at The Spastics Society's AGM in November about the small number of people with disabilities in the audience. In fact, I thought that the disabled people who were there contributed a great deal to the discussions and, after all, 5 more were sitting on the platform.

However, the reason for my writing to you is to point out what a complicated manoeuvre it can be for a severely disabled person and his or her helper to travel to London, stay in a hotel and be escorted to and from the various activities connected with the AGM.

We in our local group want to encourage our disabled members to attend this type of meeting, but we would be most grateful to have some

advice about how to get help, both practical and financial." Although facilities on British Rail and other forms of transport have improved considerably there is always the feeling of uncertainty about whether you will be able to get the wheelchair - and the occupant - on the train, whether a porter will be available at the right time and in the right place and whether you will find a taxi and a co-operative taxi driver when you arrive.

Hotels too, even when they assure you that there is suitable access and that other special services are available, are often just "not right" for disabled people.

I am sure that the real answer is to ensure that the disabled delegate has a personal helper for the journey and overnight stay and one who is not a delegate.

I realise that this recommendation can add considerably to the expenditure and that it is not always easy to find the right helper at the right time. I am sure, however, that the regional



officers of the Society will help and I suggest that you should get in touch with your regional office in plenty of time.

Nowadays there are a variety of voluntary organisations which, with advance notice, may be able to provide escorts and personal helpers and I am sure that the regional staff will know of the most appropriate contacts.

With regard to the extra cost, I would have thought that this would be a legitimate expenditure for the local group. Certainly, if a disabled member of the group is also its nominee to the AGM, then the helper's expenses will be borne by The Society.

Your body for research?

New Year is the time for making good resolutions and although this may seem a macabre topic it is one that has been raised with me many times.

A number of people with disabilities, especially during their middle and later years, feel that after their death they would like their bodies to be of use to others. This could either be by offering their bodies for post-mortem examination to help with research into the causes and treatment for cerebral palsy and other similar conditions, or by providing organs for transplant operations.

Some cerebral palsied people have made enquiries and have had negative or off-putting responses, which have at the time been quite hurtful.

A friend of mine with cerebral palsy has recently discussed her wishes with her hospital consultant and together they have drawn up the following simple document (see left).

I have my friend's permission to quote it and provided that the signatures are properly witnessed it is not essential to involve a solicitor. If, however, a solicitor is consulted, it is possible to apply for Legal Aid if you are receiving Supplementary Benefit or have a low income.

To whom it may concern

In the event of my death, I am anxious that no hindrance be placed in the way of any attempt by my medical advisors to obtain permission for a postmortem examination. Failing such a request, I wish my body to be made available for organ donation.

This request has both my agreement and that of my next of kin, and this is confirmed by our signatures, which are affixed below.

Subject

I, (name and address), agree that my mortal remains should be made available for postmortem examination if such an examination is requested by my medical advisors.

Signature: Date:

Witness: Signature: Date:

Full Name:

Address:

Next of kin

I/We, being the next of kin of (name and address), give our agreement to any request from the subject's medical advisors that a postmortem examination be carried out.

Signature: Date:

Name:

Address:

Witness: Signature: Date:

Full Name:

Address:

OUTDOOR EDUCATION COURSES & ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Churchtown Farm is a Spastics Society Centre.

THIS WINTER AND SPRING

All levels of ability and degree of handicap catered for in winter and summer. From £68.00 per 7 night week at a purpose built centre offering full central heating, heated pool, excellent food and accommodation. Activities include sailing, riding, rock-climbing, canoeing, swimming, camping, bird watching, natural history, photography, painting, pottery etc.

Brochure available from The Principal, Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre, Lanlivery, Bodmin, Cornwall.

What's On

Courses at Castle Priory

Techniques of Behaviour Modification is a course for nurses, care staff, teachers and others working with adults and children who have severe learning difficulties or behavioural problems. 18-20 February. Tuition £38, residence £36.

Goal Planning is a practical workshop on the Houts and Scott method of individual planning which is suitable for a wide range of settings and client groups. 20-22 February. Tuition £38, residence £36.

Dance-Drama Dynamics is a weekend course tutored by Wolfgang Stange. It aims to develop awareness and creativity skills which can be used with people who have sensory, intellectual or social handicaps from institutions or community settings. Limited facilities are available for wheelchairs. 22-24 February. Tuition £38, residence £36.

Adult Training Centres - Future Trends is a wide-ranging course examining current and future practice in adult training centres, social education centres and similar settings. It is suitable for instructors and line managerial staff. 25 February-1 March. Tuition £50, residence £60.

All 4 courses can be taken in packages with special rates. For more information about any of these courses write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 1HE. Tel: 0491 37551

Conferences and Leisure

Therapy in Music for Handicapped Children, an introduction to the Nordoff-Robbins Approach, is a weekend course for teachers, parents and others interested in working with handicapped children. It will be held at the Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre, 3 Leighton Place, London NW5 on 26-27 January. The price is £22 (£12.50 for students and unwaged). Details from the Secretary, The Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre. Tel: 01-267 6296

The 1981 Education Act is the subject of 2 training days organised by the Children's Legal Centre and The Spastics Society. The first is at the Brighton Centre on February 7, the second at the Devon Motel, Exeter on 7 March. Fee £8. Contact CSIE, The Spastics Society, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ. Tel: 01-387 9571.

Blissymbolics Workshop. The Blissymbolics Communication Resource Centre (UK) provides information, introductory lectures and workshops for in-service training of therapists, teachers, parents and those involved in the management of severe communication disorders. The next 5-day workshop will be on 16-20 February at Dyffryn House, Cardiff. Contact the Resource Centre at the Cardiff School of Speech Therapy, South Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education, Western Avenue, Cardiff CF5 1YP. Tel: (0222) 551770

Physical Education for the Handicapped Child - An Awareness Course will be held at The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent on 2 March. It is for all teachers, and will include discussion, seminars and lectures. There will be a minimal charge. Contact Howard Bailey at the Society's Sports and Recreation Department, see below.

The Society's sports and recreation events

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 26-27 January | Table Tennis Weekend (coaching and competition), The Star Centre, Cheltenham. |
| 16-23 March | Week Workshop on Antiques , Colwall Court, Bexhill |
| 4-11 May | Week Workshop on "1066 and All That" , Colwall Court, Bexhill |
| 25 May | Midlands Regional Athletics Meeting , Nottingham |
| 8-9 June | First National Boccia Competition at Trent Polytechnic (provisional) |
| 12 June | North East Regional Athletics Meeting , Nottingham University |

For further information, contact the Society's Sport and Recreation Department, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5H. Tel: 01-387 9571

CLASSIFIED

Jobs

ADMINISTRATOR

Residential post in pioneering Club for physically handicapped people and their friends. Accommodation could suit married couple. Relevant managerial and organising experience and sensitivity to the needs of physically handicapped people required. Letters of application including details of qualifications and experience, with names of two referees (within 2 weeks) to:

The Organiser,
Gloucestershire Association
for the Disabled,
Community House,
15 College Green,
Gloucester GL1 21Z

SITUATIONS VACANT. One disabled person living in the Birmingham/Midlands area and one disabled person living in the London area wanted to take telephone messages in his/her own home on behalf of a company involved in the

motor trade. Must have good telephone manner and preferably a knowledge and interest in motor cars. Hours and wages to be arranged. Please write to Box No. 116. *Disability Now*; address on page 16.

For sale

VESSA TREKKER MICRO CAR, 4 months old, with charger. Hardly used. Good reason for sale. £1470. Mr. Oldham 061-620-1672 after 6 p.m.

Holidays

FREE HOLIDAY 21 March - 8 April. Lovely large rural Berkshire house, if you'll feed/water our dog, ducks, hens and horse. Box 011 *Disability Now*; Central Buildings, 24 Southwark Street, London SE1 1TY.

TREZISE COTTAGE purpose-designed holidays for families with a wheelchair. Send SAE for full details to: Mrs Russell, Trezise, St Martin, Helston, Cornwall TR12 6EF.

Personal

FLAT SHARE. Spastic man, 37, mobile and self sufficient living in maisonette with garden in SW London, seeks someone to share - spastic or able-bodied, preferably professional male, possibly mature female. Cleaner employed, but help with chores etc essential. Unsuitable for anyone not fully mobile as stairs cup to and inside the house. Please con-

tact Marjorie Somers Cocks, 19 Kempson Road, London SW6 4PX. Tel: 01-736 7000.

WOULD ANYONE LIKE A "PEN GRANNIE"? My interests include people, nature, gardening and general topics and I would enjoy corresponding with a young person. Please write to Jeanne Walker, 118 Grove Lane, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire SK8 7ND.

PENFRIEND WANTED for a 56 year-old woman living in Reading. Interests include playing the piano and painting. Please write to Beryl Weaver at Flat 5/31 Block, Dwyer Road, Southcote Estate, Reading, Berkshire.

MALE PENFRIEND required, preferably over 20 years of age. I am 22 years old, female and spastic. I enjoy horse riding, swimming and am trying to improve my English and reading. Please reply to Theresa Wilkinson, 39 Hartland Grove, Priestfield, Middlesbrough, Cleveland.

PENFRIENDS WANTED by able-bodied teacher (23). Interests include music, reading, travel, art and so on. Reply to Box No. 118. *Disability Now*; address on page 16.

FEMALE PENFRIEND WANTED in the Southampton area for a 31 year old male. Severely disabled with Friedrich's Ataxia. Interests are writing letters, computers, romantic music. Please write to Michael Mac Master, 57 Mill Lane, Romsey, Hants SO5 8EQ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Guide to the Education Act 1981 has been published by RADAR. It aims to give guidance to parents on the complexities of the Act, setting out the main provisions and giving further sources of reference and help. Free from RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AB. A 10 x 12 in SAE (22p) would be appreciated.

British School of Osteopathy Brochure. A new guide to the clinics and supporting facilities available at the British School of Osteopathy has been published. It deals with hours, cost of treatment and special clinics for sportsmen, children and pregnant mothers. Available from the BSO, 1-4 Suffolk Street, London. Tel: 01-930 9254.

Seatbelt problems? Funded by the Department of Transport, RADAR is undertaking a research project into the use of car seat belts by disabled people. It aims to design seat belts which will be more convenient for disabled people and to examine and comment on the present regulations and medical aspects. If you have any comments, contact John Isaacs, Research Officer at RADAR (see above).

Flying Scholarships for Disabled People. After the success of the first series of Sir Douglas Bader Flying Scholarships in 1983, the International Air Tattoo Organising Committee are awarding 6 more scholarships for 1985 to disabled people between the ages of 17 and 40. The successful candidates attend a 6 week flying course at a Civil Aviation Authority approved flying school which could lead to a full private pilot's licence. For forms and information contact Paul Bowen, International Air Tattoo, Building 91, Greenham Common, Newbury, Berks RG15 8HL (Tel: 0635 30060) or any branch of the Nationwide Building Society. Closes 31 January.

Handicapped Helpline is a self-help advice, support and campaigning group run by and for people with disabilities and their families. They also have talks, courses and drop ins at their offices in Community Links, 81 High Street South, East Ham E6 4EJ. Tel: 01-472 6652

Access to the Arts is an information pack produced by Clyde Action and Project Ability, which aims to help individuals and groups of disabled people take part in mainstream arts activities. Available free from Clyde Action, 90 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1. Tel: 041-332 0261

Sheffield Access. The 5th edition of the Sheffield City Guide for the Disabled has been published by the Sheffield Co-ordinating Committee for the Disabled, including information on surrounding place of interest and the University. Price 50p (plus 30p postage) from Sheffield Council of Voluntary Service, 69 Division Street, Sheffield.

Residential Training for Disabled People is a 12-page guide to the facilities offered at the MSC-backed residential centres in Durham, Mansfield, Exeter and Leatherhead. Produced by the Manpower Services Commission, it is available free from Job Centres.

Corrections

Christine Mackness, is Senior Personnel Officer for Headquarters, Regions and Marketing staff, not just Park Crescent.

In my Naidex article (November), I accidentally included comments about the Remploi range of wheelchairs among others on electrically-operated wheelchairs. Of course, Remploi does not manufacture electric wheelchairs. I apologise for any misunderstanding caused - Chris Davies.

PEOPLE



Jack Blake

Cyril Cattell retired at the end of November after nearly 16 years service as Senior Regional Officer for East Region.

"It's quite a slice of The Society's history," he says, "and I shall

always be grateful for seeing it."

One of the most important changes he saw in the Regions was the introduction of County Organisers and Appeals Officers.

"It increased the complexity of my job, balancing fundraising with developing services for cp people," he says.

"I have been blessed with a quite remarkable team of stall-works who have given me great support over many years."

Ann Hithersay, Director of Regions, said: "We will remember him as being kindly, wise and loyal; always a peacemaker, yet firm and well able to defend his principles - principles based on a lifetime of service to others."

Cyril and his wife Betty are moving to a bungalow in Axminster, Devon, this month.

Monica Hart, 26, started as The Society's Press Officer on 12 November.

She has widespread freelance experience. This includes writing on social issues for 19 magazine, having a regular spot on Scottish Radio, being an agony aunt and working as a production assistant at BBC Radio.

"There is great media interest in The Spastics Society," she says, "but it is not being exploited."

"The job of the Press Officer is to build on that interest, but we rely on people within the society to provide us with the information."



Philip Dyer, who has been with The Spastics Society since 1966, is the new Manager of Neath Hill Professional Workshop.

He started on 1 November, having previously been Careers and Recreation Manager at Fitzroy Square.

"We are changing the direction of Neath Hill from a workshop which provides a small number of places for people on an indefinite basis to a wider range of short training courses," he says.

"It will be an interesting challenge to combine the needs of disabled people with the needs of an efficient commercial organisation."

Simon Crompton



The bear necessities

The New Year sees the introduction of a new counter-top collecting box for the Society. If successful, the design could replace the old child model collecting boxes.

During 1985 6,000 of the honey bear pots, sponsored by Gales Honey, will be sent to health food shops, grocery shops and chemists.

In the Spring 100 large outdoor models will go on trial.

Gales Honey are paying for the origination cost of the counter model (including the design and moulds) and the Society is paying for the production, with a contribution from Gales for each box.

The label on the pot incorporates the Gales Honey and The Spastics Society logos.

To encourage distribution of the 13 inch models, Gales are offering a gift pack to shopkeepers of a Honey Book, a Pooh Bear memory jogger and Spastics Society label badges.



Simon Crompton



Father Christmas goes on the take. A spectacled Santa (Mick Lyon, Maintenance Assistant at Park Crescent), and a well wrapped-up elephant (Chris Elmer, Social Worker) helped collect £80 for The Spastics Society on 10 December, when a group of Staff from Park Crescent and Fitzroy Square braved the cold to sing carols near Covent Garden.



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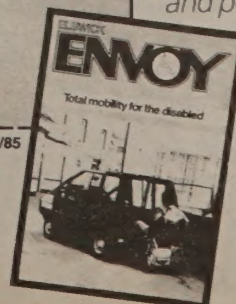
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You can't do that, Mr Jenkin

The Spastics Society has sought assurances from the Government that if the Local Government Bill becomes law, abolishing the GLC and the Metropolitan Counties, services to disabled people will not decline.

"From our discussions locally and with our knowledge of the Metropolitan Councils' functions, it is becoming increasingly clear that a short fall in services will be the inevitable result of abolition," said John Cox, director of the Society, in a letter to the Environment Secretary, Patrick Jenkin MP last month.

"It would appear grossly impractical for either the new joint boards proposed in the Bill or for the already hard-pressed boroughs to meet the service requirements and take on the functions handed on from the Metropolitan and Greater London Councils," he added.

He cited the Greater Manchester Council and the GLC as

examples of councils providing a wide range of services direct to disabled people and grant-aid to voluntary groups. And he drew Mr Jenkin's attention to the booklet, *Breaking Down Barriers, GLC Action on Disability*. "I regard it as essential reading when considering the case for abolition," he said.

"The fear of organisations such as The Spastics Society is that after abolition the services currently provided will either disappear or be greatly reduced," he said.

He called for a county-wide authority in the Metropolitan areas and for a continuation of these vital services.

If The Spastics Society does not receive satisfactory assurances it will plan a campaign.

Breaking Down Barriers is available, free, from the Disability Resource Team, GLC, Room 92, County Hall, London SE1 7PB.

New tricycle for cp children

A tricycle which helps older cerebral palsied children to walk as well as giving them mobility has been devised at Salford University.

It goes into production this month at Fyfe Carnegie Design Ltd, a commercial company which manufactures aids for disabled people.

It was developed over 2 years by a 3-man team from the Department of Orthopaedic Mechanics led by Dr Peter Bowker.

The project started at the request of Pictor House School in Sale, where a 9 year old girl with cp had grown out of her children's tricycle and needed a walking and mobility aid.

"There isn't a mass-produced push-along tricycle suitable for children over 7," says Peter Bowker. "The girl was having to manage with a toy."

On the new tricycle the saddle is positioned high so that some or all of the child's weight can be taken by the legs. The handlebars are fixed to give the child stability, and the front wheel is a castor for steering.

To find the best design, Dr Bowker visited local special schools and talked to staff, physiotherapists and children.

"The fates were with us, and luckily we hit on the right design from the start, although there were many modifications," he says.

"The feedback so far has been good, and in each of the half dozen or so schools where it's been tested, there have been 3 or 4 children who have benefited," says Peter Bowker.

Salford City Reporter



Dr Bowker (left) and technician Eddie Rothwell with the tricycle.



A seasonal view of Tadworth Court Children's Hospital is the subject of Cherene Cook's (aged 11) prizewinning painting, which will be produced as a Christmas card next year. It is one of 6 winners in a competition organised by Peaudouce, and open to all the children at Tadworth Court. The hospital is now managed as a registered charity by the Tadworth Court Trust, and the sale of the cards, which will be printed free by Peaudouce, will raise money for the charity.

Are you a victim of discrimination?

You might be refused admission to a pub because you are in a wheelchair and the landlord says that this will upset other customers.

Or you might be turned down for a job because the employer will not appoint anybody with a speech impairment even though this would in no way affect your ability to do the job.

In both cases it would be discrimination against you on the grounds of your disability and under current legislation you have no redress.

A group has recently been formed, known as Voluntary Organisation Against Discrimination, whose aim is to promote suitable legislation to protect disabled people from discrimination. Meetings are held at The Spastics Society, which also

provides the chair and secretary to the group. Other members include The British Deaf Association, The Disability Income Group, The Greater London Association for Disabled People, MIND and RADAR.

The group is maintaining parliamentary pressure for legislation. It is also collecting evidence of the discrimination which exists, and trying to develop ideas of the kind of legislation which would be suitable. A register of cases of discrimination is being compiled.

Have you evidence that you have been discriminated against? If so, the group is anxious to hear from you.

Please send details to Eileen Fry, the Lobbying Department, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ

A right to work

A booklet published in November by Disability Alliance and the Low Pay Unit calls upon the government to move ahead "immediately" on a national survey of disabled people.

A *Right to Work: disability and employment* also recommends retaining the 3 per cent quota, enforcing it more strictly and making the present code of practice enforceable by law.

"It is a valuable campaigning document," comments Eileen Fry, the Society's employment expert, "but it is not always as accurate as might be desirable."

World benefits

The "Benefits for Kids" poster in Urdu and Gujarati, mentioned in last month's issue, will not be available until February.

A poster in Punjabi is being considered, but there will be no Turkish version as we stated.

For more information, contact Linda Avery, tel: 01-636 5020, ext. 205.

A 14 DAY VIDEO EXPERIENCE

COMING IN

As a Dispart contribution to International Youth Year The Spastics Society and Phab are organising a video workcamp for young people. The workcamp, which will take place from August 10-24th 1985 at Thomas Delarue School in Tonbridge, Kent will give participants active experience in all aspects of video making: including camera techniques, scripting, research, sound and editing.

Applications are invited from all creative young people.

For further information please contact: Glyn and Liz Evans, Phab Regional Officers, Owl Lodge, 20 Leslie Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6JN. Telephone (0823) 51004.

Disabled
participation
'85

Disability Now

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Sports boost for mentally handicapped people

The GLC has committed nearly £60,000 to promote sport for mentally handicapped people.

Its Sports Sub-Committee has awarded a grant of £12,325 to the United Kingdom Sports Association for People with Mental Handicap until the end of March. Provided funds are available, it has also committed £46,415 for the following year.

The Association, founded in 1980 by the Sports Council, provides a forum for voluntary, statutory and professional bodies, helps with coaching, provides contacts and arranges sporting tournaments.

The grant will help pay for the salaries of development and publicity officers and the funding of more sports activities.

Roger Biggs, Greater London regional development officer for UKSAPMH, said "With this grant we hope to be able to introduce many of London's 25,000 people with mental handicaps to the pleasures of recreational activities."

Peter Pitt, chair of the GLC Sport Sub-Committee, said "It is the GLC's aim to integrate all disabled sportsmen and women into the facilities currently available to the able-bodied."

ALAC and CHIPS

Kath Savage, founder of CHIPS (Campaign for Handicapped Independence in Propelled Seats), was delighted with her meeting with the ALAC Review Secretariat on 18 December.

"It was very enlightening, and I really think they'll do something," she said.

CHIPS has collected 6,500 signatures in its campaign for better state-supplied electric wheelchairs.

The secretariat, chaired by Professor Ian McColl, was interested not only in Kath Savage's criticisms of the limited range of chairs, and the impracticality of the outdoor chair, but also in her observations on the repairs service.

It is expected to present its proposals to the DHSS in May.

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